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New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands, His Excellency the Honourable Danny Philip.

Mr. Philip (Solomon Islands): At the outset, Sir, let me convey the congratulations and best wishes of the Government and people of Solomon Islands on your election as President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Your proven tremendous skills as a consensus-builder and mediator will no doubt guide the Assembly to adopt useful decisions on the many important issues before us. My Government is committed to working closely with you and all Member States during this Millennium Assembly.

Solomon Islands warmly welcomes the admission of our sister nation Tuvalu as a new Member of the United Nations. This is further testimony that the United Nations is indispensable and that its body of international laws is vital to the protection and security of small island developing States. We look forward to working very closely with the delegation of Tuvalu.

The Government of Solomon Islands concurs that conflict prevention should be the cornerstone of collective security in the twenty-first century. We also acknowledge that peace and democratic stability are critical pre-conditions for economic growth and sustainable development. Moreover, economic and development cooperation have an important role to play in fostering these pre-conditions.

As highlighted in our Millennium Summit statement, the ethnic crisis in our country has challenged national peace, security and stability. It has resulted in the loss of human lives and property, the closure of all key industries in our economy and the displacement of more than 30,000 people. While it may not be comparable to major conflicts in other parts of the world, the net result in human loss and suffering is relative. Therefore, the international community, particularly the United Nations, must give equal attention to every conflict situation. All Member States, both large and small, must be treated fairly.

Challenges to the security and stability of small island developing States like Solomon Islands are, increasingly, beyond their capacity to cope. In such cases, the support of the United Nations and the international community at large is imperative. In the context of our crisis, our smallness and remoteness, limited resources, ethnic and cultural diversity and history are fundamental considerations.

Restoring law and order is the number-one priority for my Government as we strive to resolve our conflict. There is no peace without security. While a peaceful and comprehensive solution has to come from Solomon Islanders themselves, international support to sustain the peace process is necessary. Since we launched our national peace plan, we have made some progress in getting the conflicting parties to the table to

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negotiate and agree to a ceasefire. A ceasefire Agreement was signed by all parties concerned on 3 August 2000 and a National Monitoring Council to oversee its implementation was subsequently formed.

Despite some violations of the Agreement, my Government remains steadfast in our commitment to achieving peace. Further peace talks have since taken place in Honiara, the capital, and a draft framework towards a peace agreement was adopted. A more conclusive peace agreement will be negotiated in Cairns, Australia. Recognizing the importance of civil society participation in conflict resolution, reconciliation and reconstruction, my Government will continue to involve non-governmental organizations, including women's and church groups.

May I express my Government's appreciation to the South Pacific Forum countries for their understanding and support during this challenging time. I wish to mention in particular the recent visit by a Pacific ACP ministerial mission led by the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea to assess the current situation and make recommendations to the joint European Union/African, Caribbean and Pacific (EU/ACP) Commission. We further appreciate the efforts of the Governments of Australia and New Zealand in facilitating our peace process through their logistical support. To sustain long-term peace, Solomon Islands will need the cooperation of its development partners to rebuild the economy and to foster a development path that creates employment, ensures fair distribution of national resources and wealth and accommodates our diverse cultural traditions.

Only the United Nations and other international institutions have the scope and legitimacy to generate the principles, norms and rules that are necessary if globalization is to benefit everyone. The least developed countries (LDCs), including Solomon Islands, need international support to build the capacities to enable us to become more effectively and beneficially integrated into the global economy. The Third United Nations Conference on the LDCs next year will give the international community a unique opportunity to review, assess and adopt policies and measures that could effectively address the development constraints of least developed countries. Developing and sustaining competitiveness and productive capabilities, like all other aspects of development, is a long and often frustrating process. My Government, however, is prepared to work with our development partners to address these problems in a renewed spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility.

The past decade has witnessed the adoption of several international conventions and programmes of action, from the environment and sustainable development to social development and the advancement of women. Their five-year reviews, despite some progress, have indicated that insufficient resources remains a major obstacle to wider implementation, especially in rural communities in developing countries. New and additional resources are required if we are to make a difference. The United Nations Intergovernmental Conference on Financing for Development next year must produce a practical outcome on how to mobilize financing for development in the new millennium. The twenty-first century should be a century for better implementation of international programmes, a century for action rather than rhetoric.

The economic vulnerability and ecological fragility of small island developing States must be an integral basis for decisions on development cooperation with these States. Such cooperation in my view should continue to focus on better trading opportunities, including market access, capacity-building — in particular, human resources development — and adaptation and mitigation programmes to address climate change and sea level rise.

Investment in renewable energy remains a priority for Solomon Islands. Access to a reliable and cost-effective energy source is imperative if our rural population is to capitalize on the opportunities of the information age.

The international community must mobilize resources to implement the Secretary General's recommendations on bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

Solomon Islands is committed to reform, strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system, including the Security Council, which has primary responsibility under the United Nations Charter for maintaining international peace and security. Greater flexibility and understanding should be demonstrated towards those that are striving to become new permanent members of the Council, including Japan and Germany. A similar attitude should be shown towards the reconfiguration of the United Nations regional groups to reflect present-day realities

and to accommodate those Member States, including Australia and New Zealand, which wish to be placed in their most appropriate regional or geopolitical grouping.

Only an inclusive and universal United Nations can effectively perform its mandate in the twenty-first century. We must show greater understanding towards those who request to participate in the work of our Organization.

May I take this opportunity to reiterate the point made by Solomon Islands during the Millennium Summit relating to the principle of an all-inclusive and universal United Nations. A case in point is that which relates to the reunification of China, which would foster greater stability in world affairs and effectively bolster the activities of the Organization. This new approach by the United Nations for the two Chinas will enhance greater understanding in pragmatic diplomacy and pave the way for efforts currently under way in the Korean peninsula. This is not impossible to achieve, as we saw just before the turn of the century in the reunification of the two Germanys.

The challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century are daunting. An effective United Nations demands the steadfast commitment and support of all its Members. The rich and powerful must pay their dues on time, in full and without conditions. Above all, the United Nations needs global political will and resources to maintain peace and security, promote sustainable development, address environmental degradation, combat poverty and disease and foster respect for human dignity.

Human problems will always remain with us, but the way to resolve them should be through dialogue and discussion. This is the approach my Government is taking towards resolving the current ethnic unrest in our country. Attaining peace could be a painful and slow process, it could be fragile and imperfect when achieved, but we believe we can do it. We must, however, go beyond achieving peace. We must provide our people with the values and skills that will sustain peace. As we enter the twenty-first century, let us reaffirm our commitment to work in partnership with others in pursuit of global peace and human security.

The President: I now call on Mr. Ralph Ochan, Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Ochan (Uganda): I should like to offer the apologies of my Minister, who was to have made this statement today. He has had to travel to Winnipeg, where the future of some of our abducted children will be discussed tomorrow.

I bring to you, Mr. President, and all Member States of the United Nations fraternal greetings and best wishes for the new millennium from the Government and people of Uganda. I also bring to you, Sir, and through you to the fifty-fifth session the personal best wishes of the President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

I should like, at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your well-deserved and unanimous election to preside over this session of the General Assembly, which follows in the footsteps of the historic and highly successful Millennium Summit. Your predecessor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, deserves our heartfelt thanks for successfully presiding over so many special and regular sessions during his tenure as President of the General Assembly.

May I also take this opportunity to pay a very special tribute to our illustrious Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the exemplary work he has continued to perform on behalf of the Organization and the peoples of the world. The Secretary-General deserves special recognition by the United Nations family for his tireless efforts to address the numerous challenges that face the United Nations at the dawn of the new era.

Uganda warmly welcomes the admission of Tuvalu as the 189th Member of the United Nations.

For Uganda, events in Africa, and in particular instability in the Great Lakes region, continue to be of the utmost concern. For this reason, I crave the Assembly's indulgence if I devote a portion of my statement to those problems and challenges which confront us in the Great Lakes region.

As the international community is fully aware, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo poses a major threat to the stability of the Great Lakes region and ultimately the entire African continent. That conflict has its origins in the massive violation of human and democratic rights of the people of the region during the long reign of dictators in a number of countries in the region. Evidence shows that when people are oppressed, sooner or later they will rise and

take up arms against their oppressors. This is precisely what we are witnessing in the Great Lakes region.

During the 1980s and 1990s a number of dictatorships were overthrown, in spite of their determined attempts to save their regimes by resorting to the most inhuman methods of clinging to power — namely, resort to genocide. This despicable weapon was not only used in Rwanda in 1994, but has also been used to a lesser extent in Uganda, Burundi and the former Zaire. The instability we are witnessing today is thus caused by the continuing struggle of the peoples of the region to proclaim their human and democratic rights.

In Uganda the people's struggle for fundamental change ended in 1986, resulting in the establishment of democracy, stability and economic progress which the people of Uganda have enjoyed over the past 14 years. Unfortunately, the instability and civil wars in neighbouring countries have continued to impact negatively on our attempt to consolidate the results of our victory. This has especially been the case when remnants of followers of our former dictators have attempted to form alliances with dictatorial regimes in some neighbouring countries to take advantage of the power vacuum there and establish bases from which to launch desperate, but ultimately futile, attacks on Uganda.

As the Government of Uganda has stated before, at various times it cooperated with a number of progressive forces in the region to help the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo free themselves from one of the longest and most oppressive dictatorships in the African continent — I refer to the Mobutu dictatorship. In helping the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we were also hoping to free ourselves from the menace of destabilization, which had become the official policy of the Mobutu regime. That is why in 1997 Uganda found its troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

When a new regime came to power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we signed a protocol of cooperation under which Uganda and Congolese security forces would cooperate to contain the menace caused by the armed groups organized by the remnants of forces of Uganda's former dictators that were operating from Congolese territory. Unfortunately, within a very short period, the new regime in the Democratic Republic of the Congo chose to turn its back on its former allies and form an alliance with the very people who posed a threat to our security. Not only did this regime turn its back against its external allies, it also turned its back on its internal allies, thus provoking a fresh round of civil war in the country within a year. The result was that a number of African countries that had been allies in the struggle against Mobutu now found themselves sucked into the conflict.

Fortunately, these countries soon saw the folly of armed confrontation and chose to end the conflict through negotiations. The result was the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. This Agreement was a major breakthrough in the attempt to establish genuine peace in the region because it addressed the problems of establishing a democratic and accountable government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and catering for the legitimate security concerns of neighbouring countries. The Agreement still offers the best hope of establishing and maintaining peace in the region. For this reason, Uganda has worked hard to have this Agreement implemented. On 8 April this year, Uganda hosted an important meeting of the Political Committee established under the Agreement. At that meeting, a disengagement plan was adopted under which all the fighting forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would disengage under the supervision of the United Nations Organization Mission (MONUC).

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to effect the disengagement of forces in accordance with the stipulated calendar because one of the signatories, namely, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has done everything possible to block the implementation of this disengagement plan, as well as several other aspects of the Lusaka Agreement. On 14 August this year, an important summit of nine countries in the region plus the leaders of all the rebel groups fighting against the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo took place in Lusaka to identify the obstacles to implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement. Their conclusion was that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was largely to blame for the current impasse. The principal ways in which the Congolese Government has prevented the implementation of the ceasefire are refusal to participate in the national dialogue, rejection of a distinguished and eminent facilitator who was agreed upon as a result of wide consultations and by consensus, restriction of the freedom of movement of

MONUC peace observers, refusal to cooperate with the Joint Military Commission and continued violations of the ceasefire.

The leaders of the region have expressed their strong concern at the obstructions created by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement. If the Democratic Republic of the Congo does not heed the calls of regional leaders, there is a serious risk that the region could become embroiled in another large-scale war. We therefore appeal to the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government to reconsider its position and choose the path of dialogue, with both its internal and external opponents, and to abandon the path of military confrontation.

Uganda wishes to reaffirm its full commitment to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, which offers the best opportunity for bringing this conflict to an end. Uganda pledges its full support for all efforts aimed at ending the conflict and appeals to the international community to give moral and material backing to the Lusaka peace process.

Uganda believes that the problems of Burundi are essentially political and internal. As Chairman of the regional peace initiative on Burundi, President Museveni of Uganda has worked tirelessly in seeking a solution to the problem. In this capacity, he has convened and chaired many regional summits. We believe that a formula that creates democracy with security for all the people of Burundi is possible.

We wish to place on record our appreciation to the facilitator of the Burundi peace process, former President Nelson Mandela, and his predecessor, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, for their untiring efforts in working towards a peaceful solution to the Burundi problem.

Uganda welcomes the agreement signed on 28 August in Arusha by the parties to the Burundi peace process. We regret, however, that a few of the parties did not sign the agreement. Uganda would like to appeal to them to sign the agreement as soon as possible for the sake of the future of the people of Burundi and the Great Lakes region. We call upon the United Nations and the international community to provide the necessary support and resources to enable the agreement to be successfully implemented.

Uganda is committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament endorsed by the United Nations at the first special session on disarmament, way back in 1978. It is against this background that we note with concern the failure of the Disarmament Commission to reach an agreement on the convening of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament. The holding of that conference is critical for addressing important issues related to disarmament. It is a matter of deep regret that the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on an agenda for two years in a row.

Uganda also attaches great importance to the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel land mines. We supported the resolution on illicit trafficking in small arms last year because the proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons remains a major problem in our region. Uganda actively participated in regional initiatives on this matter, which resulted in the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration. We look forward to the international conference on the problem of small arms in all its aspects, scheduled to take place in July 2001.

The world has entered the twenty-first century with globalization as the most pervasive economic force to reckon with. Regrettably, the expected benefits accruing from the process are not guaranteed for all countries. For some, it has opened opportunities for rapid growth and development through increased trade and advances in technology. For others, the process has led to increasing income disparity and marginalization in the global economy. The biggest challenge facing us at the dawn of this century, therefore, is to muster the necessary political will to act together and create an enabling environment for the successful integration of the poorer countries into the global economy. Uganda is of the view that the issue of globalization can and should be seriously addressed multilaterally by the United Nations and by other international organizations. We are confident that with the commitment and goodwill of the major trading nations, the establishment of a rule-based multilateral trading system that has been institutionalized in the World Trade Organization will facilitate the integration of developing countries into the global trading system.

The challenge of ridding the world of the scourge of abject poverty deserves more attention now than ever before because, as more of the world's population is now enjoying better living standards, the situation of many others in the developing countries, especially the

least developed countries, is deteriorating rapidly and dangerously. A larger percentage of the world's population lives on less than a dollar a day today than did a decade ago. The Secretary-General's report reveals that people living in sub-Saharan Africa are almost as poor today as they were 20 years ago. This is an extremely sad commentary on the state of development cooperation. Urgent measures should be undertaken to arrest this deterioration of the living conditions of the people in the developing countries.

In Uganda we believe that significant reductions in poverty can be achieved through sustained and broad-based income growth. We further believe that this can be effectively done through modernization of the agricultural sector, which dominates the economy and employs the majority of our population. That is why in the past two years we have been working to develop a comprehensive set of policies for the modernization of agriculture, as part of the Government's broader strategy for poverty eradication. Uganda welcomes and fully endorses the Secretary-General's recommendations on specific actions that need to be taken both nationally and at the international level to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty.

The past decade has witnessed an unabated deterioration in the socio-economic conditions of the least developed countries. A quick review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s will show that there have been more setbacks than progress. While the least developed countries have undertaken far-reaching and sometimes painful measures of adjustment and reform, the actions by the international community have fallen short of their commitments to provide adequate external support to complement their efforts. As a result, the least developed countries continue to suffer from the lack of supportive external resources for development, owing to a steady decline in the flow of official development assistance.

While it is true that foreign direct investment flows have increased significantly in the past decade, the least developed countries are not yet equipped to attract such investment to a significant extent. High levels of external debt have negatively affected their economies, and despite decades of liberalization most industrialized countries still maintain protectionist measures in their markets, especially for agricultural products and textiles — the two sectors in which developing countries have a recognized comparative advantage. All these factors have had the combined effect of stunting further the economic and social prospects of the least developed countries.

In this regard, Uganda strongly supports the Secretary-General in urging the industrialized countries to consider granting duty-free and quota-free access to exports from the least developed countries, as a demonstration of their commitment to the integration of the least developed countries into the global trading system. My delegation also urges the General Assembly to adopt the recommendations of the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development contained in the Bangkok Consensus and Plan of Action for least developed countries. We call upon the leading industrialized countries to live up to their commitments in the context of the agreement they reached in 1999 at the Cologne G-8 Summit. We also call for stronger support for relevant United Nations bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to enable effective implementation of their mandates to assist the least developed countries.

With specific reference to the African continent, where 33 of the 48 least developed countries are found, the socio-economic situation is much more precarious despite many efforts by many African countries individually and collectively to lay solid foundations for development. The difficulty in achieving positive results in Africa's development has been further complicated by the severity of Africa's AIDS crisis. We call upon the international community to lend support to Africa's own efforts to realize the objective of the African renaissance, which aims to place the continent at the forefront of human development and progress. The international community should support the efforts of African countries by fulfilling commitments made in the context of the United Nations New Agenda for Development of Africa in the 1990s. These commitments include the reduction of African debt, adequate resource flows, provision of greater market access and assistance in diversification and capacity-building. In this connection, Uganda supports the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report to this session.

I reiterate Uganda's commitment to uphold the values and principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I pledge our

Government's continued adherence to international human rights Conventions and norms.

In pursuit of an international human rights regime, it is imperative that we establish effective institutions and mechanisms for this purpose. Uganda will continue to support and work towards the establishment of a strong International Criminal Court. Of particular concern to us is the deterrence and punishment of the crime of genocide, which remains a continuing threat in our region.

At the national level, in a bid to implement the fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution, Ugandans voted on 29 June 2000 in a referendum for a political system of their choice. I take this opportunity to thank the international community for its support for the success of the referendum exercise. I am happy to report that the referendum was declared free and fair by both local and international observers. This experience convinces us that the referendum proposed for Western Sahara should be conducted as soon as possible. It offers the best alternative to the possibility of continued armed conflict.

In our struggle to end internal conflict, Parliament enacted the Amnesty Act 2000. Under that Act, an Amnesty Commission has now been established and is operational. The mandate of the Commission is to monitor programmes of demobilization, reintegration and resettlement of returnees, coordinate a programme of sensitization of the general public on the amnesty law, consider and promote appropriate reconciliation mechanisms in the affected areas and promote dialogue and reconciliation in the spirit of the Amnesty Act. There is a programme of reintegration into society, which involves acquisition of skills and a fund to promote self-employment. It is our hope that this process will bring to an end internal conflict and all human rights violations associated with conflict situations.

In closing, Uganda believes that as we enter the new century the United Nations should be reformed, equipped and provided with the necessary resources to implement effectively and efficiently the mandates the General Assembly and other principal organs of the Organization have entrusted to it. In this connection, Uganda hopes that the long-drawn-out negotiations on the reform of the Security Council will be finalized at the current session of the General Assembly. We are committed to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on this matter, and would support Japan and Germany as permanent members of an expanded Security Council, as well as one permanent member each from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable George Odlum, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Saint Lucia.

Mr. Odlum (Saint Lucia): Humanity, our greatest concern, is the reason why we are gathered here today. Humanity stands at a defining moment in world history. The challenge before us is to harness the collective consciousness and will of the international community to address the problems of planet Earth.

During the course of the past century, the disparities between and within nations have widened. Poverty, ill-health, illiteracy and hunger among the world's people have increased. The world's ecosystem, the foundation upon which we all depend for survival, is rapidly deteriorating. That is why we must regard this moment as significant in human history, despite Fukuyama's claim that history has ended. The Third Millennium offers us the opportunity to break away from the shackles of the past and create new beginnings. The choices that we make can change the face of humankind and lead to the accepted goals of global peace, economic and human security and the greater good of humanity.

The past century was replete with examples of nations preening themselves for conquest and domination. The conquistadors who plundered the New World are still at large, using global institutions, new technologies and weapons of destruction to oppress and dominate the weak, the innocent and the dispossessed sectors of mankind. The message that Saint Lucia brings to this Millennium Assembly comes from the pen of Saint Lucia's Nobel Prize Laureate Derek Walcott, who reminds us that, "There are no worlds to conquer/But worlds to re-create".

Minds that are historically poisoned with conquest can hardly experience the essential equanimity and calm of re-creation. The theme of this millennium Assembly reaches out in the direction of re-création: a people-centred reshaping of the role and function of the United Nations and a purposeful moral thrust in re-creating the battered, demoralized societies in which we live.

That is why we must embrace the United Nations Millennium Summit's theme, "We the peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". The attainment of meaningful transformation in the world system calls for a United Nations capable of assuming a vanguard role in development and in advancing human society and security. The United Nations system must play a critical role in promoting global responsibility. Global responsibility implicitly involves some form of moral commitment to human welfare. It is the formulation of economic programmes designed to bring about economic redistribution, to safeguard against economic crises and to formulate developmental policies that are in keeping with environmental protection and sustainability.

The United Nations should be strengthened to play a more central role in development, ensuring equity and security for its small, vulnerable Members like Saint Lucia against the greed of profit-driven Powers. Instead, we are witnessing a consistent, systemic weakening of the United Nations' role in development, with development issues being left to undemocratic institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which perpetuate global economic inequities and ignore the development issues and concerns of developing countries.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations' primary development agency, is now reoriented to giving advice in governance and democratic elections. The United Nations therefore plays a peripheral role in development, and small States like Saint Lucia are left on their own to be devoured by powerful States backed by powerful transnational corporations.

Saint Lucia joined this Organization and entrusted it with our hopes of peace, security and development. This Organization has passed on our trust to a few dominant Powers and corporations. If the United Nations has a diminished role in ensuring development, peace and security for its small and vulnerable Members, then our presence here is an unnecessary diversion of our scarce resources. In these circumstances we feel threatened and vulnerable that our trust has been betrayed.

The greater good of human security cannot be fostered simply through peacekeeping operations and humanitarian missions. There must be a global drive to empower people, through the elimination of the adverse conditions that cause the incapacitation of the human spirit and the imprisonment of the imagination. Hence, the United Nations of the twenty-first century must be capable of playing a significant role in liberating the human spirit and imagination through education and real opportunity. It must be able to reposition itself to give practical meaning to the rising tide all over the world as the common man aspires to higher and wider horizons.

In reaffirming our faith in the United Nations and its Charter, it is again with the hope of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The threat to peace does not necessarily emanate from military warfare. There are new forms of war currently being waged on the small, the weak and the vulnerable.

In previous addresses to this Assembly, and in the statement of our Head of Government to the Millennium Summit, we pointed out the injustice perpetrated on Saint Lucia and other banana-producing countries of the Caribbean by the WTO, through its rejection of the marketing regime for bananas in Europe as being WTO-incompatible. That ruling has condemned our countries to the prospect of economic ruin, in that the stabilizing force of our economy has been dealt a mortal blow.

Since that ruling by the WTO, which granted an unreasonably limited time to adjust our economy, we have lost 50 per cent of our foreign exchange earnings, while thousands of farmers have become unemployed and poverty and crime are on the increase. Yet, despite our urgent economic situation, negotiations between the European Union (EU) and the United States have been stalled. Saint Lucia calls on the United States to resume discussions with the European Union on a new marketing system for bananas that could be acceptable to all, giving due consideration to the Caribbean proposal. But that is a pipedream. Our hopes have slipped on a banana skin, because there is a new sweetheart deal between Britain and the United States.

Resilient a people as we are, we are moving to diversify our economies and to build another sector — financial services. Again, the economic giants are determined to crush our development efforts and subject our people to poverty by attacking yet another sector of our narrow economic base.

Saint Lucia has acted in good faith in fulfilling our obligations to the Charter of the United Nations,

assuming equality of all Member States. We have respected the territorial integrity and political independence of other Member States and have never interfered in the internal affairs of another State.

Today, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has chosen to dictate the tax policies of Saint Lucia and other Caribbean islands by labelling our tax regime as a harmful tax haven and is threatening to impose sanctions for non-compliance with its prescribed changes to our tax policies.

It is Saint Lucia's sovereign right to determine its taxes. We cannot tell the OECD countries what taxes to impose, nor do we expect interference in the exercise of the sacred right entrusted to us by our citizens. Our development options are few and limited, and we consider the OECD action a violation of our basic human right to development and to pursue a decent standard of living for our people.

Our peace is threatened, our democracy is being undermined. The conditions for conflict are being created in my country and in the region, and yet, instead of addressing development, we are being asked to strengthen the United Nations to intervene in national crises.

Within the context of a globalized world, the concept of sovereignty is fast becoming an endangered species. No self-respecting nation would willingly abandon its sovereignty for the illusion of a better world, when all the signals from this brave new world are destructive and negative. In respect of peacekeeping interventions, one can surrender sovereignty to avoid a holocaust but certainly not to permit well-heeled rapacious countries to hog the capital flows in the financial services sector.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Last week, through our Heads of State and Government, we reaffirmed our faith in the United Nations and its Charter as indispensable foundations for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. This reaffirmation is of particular significance to small developing States like Saint Lucia, lacking the size and resources to urge the international community to give due consideration to our concerns and interests. We agreed to entrust the United Nations with ensuring equality among States. It is of paramount importance to us that the United Nations does not flinch in its role of fostering international dialogue and consensus building, so that the concerns and interests of all Member States are adequately addressed and reflected in the work of the Organization. We do not expect our trust to be given to more powerful influences to determine our collective future. We rededicated ourselves to upholding the principle of equality of States and expect that equality to be realized in policy directives of the United Nations with a balance in representation of the interests of Member States and regions.

Saint Lucia calls on the United Nations to assume its rightful, central role in development and the governance of globalization, to promote democracy and good government nationally and internationally, to stand for right and the protection of its weak, and vulnerable Members against the powerful and dominant and to seek equality and justice for all. This should be the focus of the United Nations in the new millennium if poverty is to be eradicated and peace enjoyed.

Saint Lucia cannot be enthusiastic about other issues until development and equity in the global economy become a priority. Our decline in revenues denies us the capacity to increase our contribution to peacekeeping, and we will be reluctant to do so until there is an increase in our participation and benefit from the global economy. Man cannot live by governance alone or peace alone. Our people must find the sustenance that will enable them to participate in governance and peace. Saint Lucia therefore eagerly looks forward to the convening of the intergovernmental conference on financing for development to discuss in a holistic manner issues of trade, finance and monetary matters in the context of globalization and trade liberalization.

We have always promoted an integrated approach to development and global issues, and this age of technology and interdependence lends itself more than ever to the integrated approach of assessing and addressing the issues at hand.

We continue to view the financing for development process as the missing and the critical link in the development agenda for a sustainable and lasting resolution to poverty and threats to peace. We hope that through this process the United Nations will reclaim its legitimate role in development, entrusted to

it in the Charter, and promote the effective participation of all its Member States in the governance of the global economy and globalization, for the benefit of all the peoples of the world.

The greatest threat to world peace and democracy is the systemic imbalances and inequities in the global economy and the institutions that govern it. This situation is unsustainable and explosive. The thrust of many statements made during the Millennium Summit and this session has been to strengthen peacekeeping efforts with resources and personnel. We recognize that there is need for improvement in peacekeeping efforts to make them more effective. However, equal emphasis and effort are not being committed to addressing the real threats to peace and the primary causes of war. Developing countries are threatened by continued deprivation and inequities in the global economy. Unless these inequities and imbalances are corrected, we will continue to create situations of unrest and threaten intervention while causes go unaddressed.

Similarly, we parade the fashionable notion of poverty eradication in isolation, ignoring the complex, multi-faceted nature of poverty and the causes of poverty, including global economic inequities. This façade to placate the poorest is fooling some of the people, but not all of the world's poor. The holistic nature of development takes precedence over the palliative of poverty eradication. International cooperation in development should instead be demonstrated through meeting the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product in overseas development assistance, through debt cancellation, special and differential treatment on a contractual basis for developing countries and adequate financial support for the United Nations' development programmes.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to promoting democracy, albeit with the emphasis on democracy at the national level. The inherent problem in achieving this objective is clear, since democracy at the national level is undermined by the lack of a commensurate level of democracy at the international level. The world's peoples and leaders will rightly mock the call for democracy if this principle is not equally applied in the Security Council, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, the main institutions that currently govern world affairs in peace, security and the world economy, respectively. The United Nations must demonstrate leadership of democracy at the global level if we are to believe in this principle as a foundation for peace and prosperity in the new millennium. All Member States must be able effectively to participate in matters of peace, security and the global economy in order to give real meaning to democracy and governance.

The symbolism of the United Nations is universally recognized, but our role in this millennium is to redefine its goals, sharpen its focus and make it a more efficient instrument for effecting global change and development. But this institutional change must be inspired and fired by the commensurate determination of Member nations to re-create their own societies. The resonance and sympathetic vibration of our visionary Secretary-General Kofi Annan is not enough. We as Member nations must set about the task of societal re-creation, within the parameters of our own societies, to offset the negative influence of moral degradation, crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour. These are the benchmarks of the uncivil society.

In the re-creation of our own societies we face the structural disadvantages of unemployment, illiteracy and the tyranny of consumerism and materialism. Our young people are cannon-fodder for the blandishments of cable television. They lap up a culture and a lifestyle that militate against their own self-development. They fail to understand the nexus between earning and spending and develop an appetite for consumer durables which their economic base could never support. They become aggressively fired-up with demands and rising expectations that neither the resources of the State nor their flimsy work ethic can entertain. They develop a culture of carping criticism that leaves no space for a culture of appreciation. Caribbean Governments look on almost helplessly at a growing phenomenon that threatens to disturb the rhythm of projected economic growth and breeds a kind of lawlessness which conventional law-and-order techniques cannot contain.

As globalization erodes the economic and social bases of our islands, international and bilateral aid dwindles. As ideologies and ideals give way to pragmatism, the weak social and political fabric of these fledgling nations is laid bare. The vocabulary of containment and patience can no longer hold back the anarchist tide of popular revolt. Small nations will encounter their own Seattles, with no National Guardsmen to come to the rescue, no sustaining

philosophies to stem the tide, only the grim statistics of falling revenues and rising expectations.

Nations which attempt to grapple with these social problems have incurred the wrath of large countries, culminating in isolation and the imposition of sanctions. Countries like Cuba and Libya have felt the crush of sanctions. The United Nations system must rethink the strategy of imposing sanctions and must devise other means of ensuring compliance within the international community. The imposition of sanctions is often inhumane and is usually accompanied by devastating economic consequences and fails to produce the desired effect in targeted countries. The international community should realize that interventions, embargoes and sanctions do not a democracy make.

Because of the untold suffering inflicted on civilian populations, a twenty-first century United Nations system cannot continue to endorse the imposition of sanctions. What is even more devastating is that the general will of this Assembly is often flouted and ignored when the international consensus calls for a removal of sanctions. Is democracy merely a convenient attitude? If so, it begs the question as to the insistence that countries like Cuba should conform to the principles of democracy when these principles themselves are being compromised and rejected as a matter of convenience. It is these injustices and violations that have turned world opinion in favour of the embattled Caribbean country Cuba and have made its leader Fidel Castro a living symbol of the unconquerable spirit of our people to triumph over adversity and incredible odds.

More than ever, the positives of a reformed United Nations will become a refuge, a bastion of hope for nations nonplussed by events that seem suddenly out of their control. In my previous address to this time-honoured institution, I alluded to the plight of Africa. I should like to reiterate that as Africa was the last impression of the twentieth century, poetic justice demands that it must be our first preoccupation in the twenty-first century.

In the process of re-creation, Saint Lucia and the Caribbean must strive to become a catalyst for peace in the international forum. We must use our collective influence to contain the border disputes that threaten to create friction in Latin America and the Caribbean. We must also be wary of importing conflicts into our region.

In the case of Taiwan and China, it is vital that we pursue the line of working towards a one-China policy instead of fuelling the hostilities that characterize the existing relationship between these two countries. An early resolution of the impasse between Taiwan and China will strengthen the solidarity of the developing world.

In the case of Africa, the Caribbean has always enjoyed a peculiarly symbiotic relationship with Africa. Men like Padmore, C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, Sir Arthur Lewis and Walter Rodney have all worked assiduously at the side of African leaders like Nkrumah, Nyerere, Sékou Touré and Léopold Senghor in order to realize the ultimate dream of a united Africa liberated from the bondage of poverty, disease and exploitation. This noble tradition must continue. Once again, Saint Lucia calls on its CARICOM colleagues to pursue the possibility of obtaining observer status at the Organisation of African Unity.

The peoples of the African continent face the onslaught of the AIDS pandemic that threatens to decimate the population of the entire continent. But the devastating effect of AIDS is felt not only on the African continent. Today the world is confronted with the greatest health crisis in human history. The effects of this disease can destabilize fragile democracies and economic progress in both the developing and the developed world.

We welcome President Clinton's efforts to create an African AIDS Trust Fund and the pledge of one billion US dollars to combat AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. We also welcome Cuba's undertaking to send three thousand Cuban doctors to Africa. However, given the transnational nature of the disease, the United Nations should use its institutions to launch a movement aimed at the complete eradication of this scourge. If the world is to survive the ravages of this plague, we must not only pledge financial resources towards research and the development of pharmaceuticals, but we must make those pharmaceuticals affordable and accessible and also continue to sensitize the international community to preventive measures.

At year's end, the General Assembly will witness the end of the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Much remains to be done

before the United Nations is successful in carrying out its statutory mandate to ensure complete and absolute political equality for the peoples of the relevant territories. This must remain the guiding principle of the international community. That the majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories are small islands does not mean that the self-determination of their peoples is less important than for former territories which achieved sovereign status. We must resist all attempts to legitimize the present unequal colonial arrangements, which do not provide for full and absolute political equality. Saint Lucia therefore fully endorses the proclaiming of a second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and calls on Member States and United Nations organizations to fulfil their responsibilities under the Charter and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

On the initiative of the Government of Canada, a debate has started in the forum of the Organization of American States on the subject of global human security. It is comforting for developing States, and especially small developing States, to feel that the conscience of the international world has been pricked into focusing on the security of the entire globe — the entire globe. On a discordant note, the United States of America is now concentrating its attention on a national missile defence system aimed at protecting the United States from missile attacks. At this strategic juncture in the new millennium, when world leaders are gingerly nurturing a culture of peace and disarmament, this action runs counter to the mood for reconciliation and universal nuclear disarmament. This unfortunate and myopic emphasis on the protection of one nation and one people might well trigger a rash of self-protective nuclear explosions, effectively eroding the fragile trust which underpins the hope for global human security.

There are no worlds to conquer, but worlds to recreate. The recreation of the United Nations must be posited on the basis of mutual respect between rich and poor, mutual respect between large and small nations. As small and desperate as our islands appear to be, we should hold fast to the principles that inform the operations of the United Nations.

We challenge the paradigm shift which the developed nations are cleverly manipulating to shunt the focus of the United Nations towards peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. Saint Lucia states clearly and unequivocally that the United Nations focus should zero in on development as a radical instrument for eradicating poverty and war.

No $600 million carrot will tempt us to abandon the principle of a nation's capacity to pay. No Congress should determine the scale of assessments for the United Nations, and there should be no conditionality for paying arrears and meeting one's obligations to this Organization.

The hungry sheep look up and are not fed. The wolves run amok and batten on their hunger, and the cycle goes on in its impropriety. This Organization must not flinch in its millennial resolve to end the carnage.

> "So I come to you from the weary battlefield of time
> Armed with the disappointments of yesterday
> The sufferings of today and the dreams of tomorrow
> In the struggle I may die
> But let's not forsake another tomorrow".

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker is His Excellency The Honourable Bonaya Adhi Godana, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Kenya.

Mr. Godana (Kenya): Let me begin by congratulating the President on behalf of my delegation on his unanimous election to lead the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly. I am confident that his able leadership and vast diplomatic experience will steer the business of this session of the General Assembly to the desired outcome. I also wish to express my delegation's gratitude to his predecessor, Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, for the able manner in which he presided over the work of our previous session. I commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose commitment in shaping the United Nations to meet the challenges of the new millennium has won the respect and admiration of many. I particularly commend him for his selfless dedication to duty and encourage him to continue serving the international community with the same zeal.

The proliferation of conflicts in Africa continues to pose serious threats to peace, security and stability. Conflicts have had a negative impact on the continent's development capacity and continue to undermine efforts to improve the living standards of our peoples.

They have caused considerable destruction and loss of lives, generated millions of refugees and displaced persons and exacerbated famine conditions in areas such as the southern Sudan and the Horn of Africa.

Africa recognizes the primary role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. It also recognizes the need for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping and peace-building. Such efforts have yielded positive results in some countries. However, there are others, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the United Nations has been slow to act.

Positive regional initiatives have been recorded in the cessation of armed hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We commend the parties for the maturity they have demonstrated. We urge both parties to the conflict to uphold the ceasefire while working towards a final negotiated settlement of that dispute. The United Nations is urged to speedily discharge its duty along that common border.

The establishment last month of a Transitional National Assembly and the election of the President of the Republic of Somalia was indeed a momentous occasion. I pay tribute to President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti for his mediation efforts and his steadfast commitment to the cause of peace in Somalia. I call upon the international community to continue providing support and humanitarian assistance to the Somali nation. I also hope that the recently concluded accord on Burundi will bring to an end the seven-year-old civil war and enable the people of that country to redirect their efforts towards reconstruction and development.

The recent unfortunate experience in Sierra Leone calls for a review of peacekeeping operations, particularly with regard to the safety, commissioning and deployment of troops. Kenya supports the recent initiative aimed at curbing the trade in illicit diamonds, which fuels and sustains conflicts in Africa. Kenya welcomes the decision by the Security Council authorizing the establishment of an international criminal court to try those responsible for atrocities committed in the civil war in Sierra Leone. It should signal to the rebels there and elsewhere that the international community will not tolerate acts against humanity.

Turning to disarmament and international security, we are disappointed that the Conference on Disarmament for the second year running has not undertaken any substantive work. This situation is particularly disturbing, since the Conference is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The Conference has for a considerable period of time been expected to conduct serious negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and a treaty on nuclear disarmament. This Assembly has in various resolutions urged the Conference on Disarmament to undertake such negotiations. During its fifty-fourth session, for instance, the General Assembly passed four resolutions which, inter alia, called on the Conference to get down to serious work.

The lack of progress at the Conference is due to the reluctance of key nuclear-weapon States to submit themselves to negotiate in good faith, despite their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We still expect the nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitment to undertake genuine nuclear disarmament, which they renewed during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty. Failure of the Conference on Disarmament will send the wrong signal to non-nuclear-weapon States and might well encourage those with nuclear ambitions to join that club. After the end of the cold war, there is no longer any justification for maintaining nuclear arsenals, if there ever was one. Kenya calls on the nuclear countries to preserve outer space as a nuclear-free zone.

The serious security problem posed by the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is a matter of grave concern to Kenya. We hosted in March this year the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa Conference on the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. The Conference, attended by 10 States of the region, adopted the Nairobi Declaration, which calls for greater cooperation and information-sharing between law enforcement and border control officials of States in our region, as well as the strengthening and/or adoption of national laws and control mechanisms governing civilian possession of arms, and urges source countries to regulate weapons and arms transactions through strict licensing. The Nairobi Conference was an important initiative. Kenya is in the process of organizing a follow-up meeting later this year.

In the same vein, I should like to express our full support for the International Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for 2001. We hope that that Conference will adequately address our concerns.

A consequence of conflicts and the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons has been the massive movement of refugees across borders. Kenya continues to host a large number of such refugees. This has put a heavy strain on our own scarce national resources.

I am happy to note that the Government of Kenya is in the process of finalizing the Refugee Bill 2000 in order to address the refugee phenomenon. The Bill is a result of joint efforts between the Government of Kenya, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other stakeholders. It will provide refugees with a better legal framework in which to live and exercise their rights. Kenya would like to see an end to the disparity in the treatment of refugees globally. We have noted with concern the bewildering inconsistency in the responses to the refugee problems in other parts of the world compared with those in Africa. We hope that in future the international community will respond in a fair and consistent manner to refugee crises in all parts of the world.

The promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is firmly on the international agenda. In Kenya the Government effort is geared towards enhancing public awareness of existing rights and freedoms. In this regard, the Government has prepared a bill seeking to establish an independent human rights commission to monitor and protect human rights. That commission would also advise the Government on its international obligations on the protection and promotion of human rights.

During the last session of the Assembly I commended the High Commissioner for Human Rights for adopting a proactive approach to human rights issues. We continue to stress that human rights should be addressed in a global context through a dialogue-based approach. In this way, we will realize wider acceptance and observance of human rights.

The rise in transnational networks of crime, narcotics, money laundering and terrorism is another matter of grave concern to us. The effects of the August 1998 terrorist bombing in Nairobi are still evident in our economy and in the lives of Kenyans. We have undertaken measures to contain this menace by establishing special policing units and strict control of movement on border areas and other national entry points. We are also collaborating with international security agencies, such as Interpol, and have signed extradition treaties with a number of States. We call for concerted efforts to adopt effective international measures to eradicate the growing and dangerous links between terrorist groups, drug traffickers and armed criminal groups. The struggle against terrorism can only succeed if there is cooperation between all countries to track down and apprehend wanted terrorists.

Kenya supports the initiative to restructure and revitalize the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. We stress that the promotion of development should remain a central priority of the Organization.

The process of reforming the Economic and Social Council should be expedited by organizing its work throughout the year and reinforcing its role in providing overall policy guidance for operational development programmes and funds.

Kenya supports the implementation of policies that foster economic growth in developing countries in order to bridge the widening gap between rich and poor. My delegation urges the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions to ensure the facilitation of stronger and more equitable international multilateral development cooperation designed to address the growing problems in economic development.

We are all aware of the challenging task of eradicating poverty consistent with the overall objectives and strategies agreed in the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development and with the outcome of the Millennium Summit. Kenya supports and continues to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action. This commitment is manifested in our Government's determination to establish a firm policy and institutional framework for mainstreaming the poverty eradication agenda. The formulation of the National Poverty Eradication Plan is a step towards focusing national policies and operational priorities on the poor, as well as providing an enabling environment for them to participate in economic and social development.

Further, the Government of Kenya has developed an interim poverty reduction strategy paper, which has been prepared in consultation with all stakeholders. The strategy paper outlines measures designed to improve economic performance, while identifying key actions to reduce the prevalence of poverty.

The above measures are part of the Kenya Government's strategy to restore economic growth while maintaining economic stability. Economic reforms are gaining momentum and are expected to lead to a progressive increase in real per capita growth. Currently, the country is facing a severe drought, the worst in our country's history. This is having a debilitating effect on our economy. We appreciate the assistance received so far from the international community and seek continued support to deal with the situation.

Globalization poses enormous challenges to developing countries, and ours is no exception. Kenya welcomes initiatives that protect the weaker States from the adverse effects of globalization. The ability of African countries to participate effectively, exercise their rights and meet their obligations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) is an important determinant in their integration into the international trading system. My delegation is concerned about the growing protectionism manifested in attempts to support a new round of multilateral trade negotiations within the context of the WTO. Kenya is firmly opposed to the introduction of new protectionist barriers to trade camouflaged as labour, health and environmental standards.

At the same time, we urge the implementation of special and differential provisions in respect of developing and least developed countries because of their low levels of industrialization and the vulnerable nature of their economies.

The increased globalization of financial markets and capital flows poses new challenges for the mobilization of adequate resources. Kenya shares the concerns of developing countries over the general decline in official development assistance and the free flow of foreign direct investment to developing countries. Portfolio investment, which tends to be volatile and unpredictable, as experienced during the 1997 financial crisis, is a source of financial instability. We support the creation of a new international financial architecture for a more stable financial system. The global market environment poses enormous challenges, and there is an urgent need for supportive international policies that will ensure the financial system's efficient functioning.

The slow progress in Africa's attainment of sustainable economic growth is linked to the failure to mobilize resources. This has been aggravated by internal conflicts and the prevalence of diseases such as malaria and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which in themselves have a causal relationship with poverty and deprivation. My country, in collaboration with international agencies, is zealously pursuing scientific research to find a cure for malaria and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We call upon the international community to support our research efforts to find a cure for these diseases, which continue to ravage millions. Kenya wishes to stress the need to ensure the easy availability of existing drugs to those already afflicted.

Given that information technologies are important prerequisites for development, the developed countries should direct resources to accelerate the development of information technology in Africa. In this regard, Kenya welcomes the Okinawa Charter initiative of the G-8 countries and looks forward to the implementation of its aims.

My delegation notes the commitment made by the G-8 to speed up the pace of implementation of the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, in line with the targets agreed at the Cologne Summit. However, the initiative suffers from a lack of commitment to implementation and should be reviewed with a view to being speeded up. We share the concerns, expressed by the leaders from developing countries who attended the Okinawa G-8 Summit, on the impact of the debt burden to poverty alleviation efforts. Debt repayment in sub-Saharan Africa is to the detriment of health, education and other essential services. Kenya urges creditor countries to honour pledges for debt relief and increase balance of payment support to developing countries.

Kenya attaches special importance to South-South cooperation. It is in recognition of the important role of economic cooperation among developing countries that we continue actively to pursue economic integration with countries in our own subregion. The relationship between regional and subregional economic groupings is seen within the framework of

the African Economic Community, which Kenya fully supports.

The institutions established in 1945 are overdue for an overhaul. The world political, economic and security landscape has changed, and so must these institutions. The United Nations must become a truly universal Organization, democratic and representative of the many diverse interests. Its organs should reflect this rich diversity, with effective representation and participation at all levels of decision-making. The General Assembly has to reassert its role within the Organization. The Security Council must also reflect the principle of equitable geographical representation and the realities of our times. Kenya seeks to have permanent seats on the Security Council allotted for Africa, to be filled by African countries on a rotational basis and on the same footing as existing permanent seats. The transformation of institutions dealing with other issues is equally overdue if we are to re-energize the efficacy and effectiveness of the United Nations, as called for in the Millennium Declaration.

Kenya appreciates the increased utilization of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. We are nevertheless dissatisfied with the level of involvement with environment and human settlement issues. There is a huge, under-utilized capacity in the Nairobi offices. It should be noted also that the Nairobi Declaration adopted by Member States in February 1997 declared the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to be the principal body in the field of environment. Kenya is therefore totally opposed to the creation of new institutions with similar concerns and calls upon the international community to strengthen the role of UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in Nairobi.

In conclusion, Kenya fully embraces the spirit of the Millennium Declaration, with a pledge to make its modest contribution in the general service of a happier family of nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is Her Excellency Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner (Austria): First of all, let me say how satisfied I am about this week's decision of our 14 European Union (EU) partners to lift the measures implemented on 31 January against Austria. This is a victory for reason, and it is also a victory for Europe. In the last seven and a half months — a very difficult time, I must say — the United Nations has stood by us. Austria treasures this support. The United Nations has had confidence in our firm commitment to universal standards and values. The report of the "three wise men", Martti Ahtisaari, Marcelino Oreja and Jochen Frowein, comes to the same conclusion. Austria will continue its role as an active, reliable and constructive Member State of the United Nations.

Austria expects to resume fully its formal and informal work within the European Union. This is absolutely crucial in view of the important projects that lie ahead of us: first, the reform of the institutions of the European Union and, secondly, the enlargement of the Union, a matter of great importance and a historic responsibility. An enlarged Union will bolster European stability and prosperity. Its benefits will reach beyond Europe. Austria, as a country in the heart of Europe, will fully support and, in its own interest, accelerate the process of enlargement.

Since this fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly coincides with the turn of the millennium, we ought to undertake a broader examination of today's world. We ought to design policies of a long-term nature. All too often we have to cope with contradictions when engaging in day-to-day politics and when rapidly responding to crises on the one hand and addressing sustainable societal development on the other. A great number of our decisions taken today have important implications for future policy options. Generations to come will have to bear the cost, and they will enjoy the benefits of our policies.

It is in this context that I wish to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his clairvoyance and leadership. His millennium report embraces a balanced analysis of the challenges the international community faces today, and it offers concrete, accomplishable and far-sighted recommendations. Austria welcomes this road map for the future course of United Nations activities and will follow its guidelines.

Furthermore, Austria supports the timely initiative of the Secretary-General to mandate a comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. Since the environment for complex peace operations has become more challenging than ever before, Austria, as a major troop contributor, welcomes the report and the recommendations drawn

up by a group of experts under the leadership of Mr. Brahimi. We are ready to support their implementation.

As Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), I wish to outline a number of major achievements of the OSCE during this year. The OSCE serves as the primary forum for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in my region. This year we are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. This truly historic document initiated the Helsinki Process, from which we still draw valid lessons for our common efforts to achieve "freedom from fear", to use this vivid notion from the report of the Secretary-General (*A/54/2000, para. 65*). Security and stability through cooperation and the effective protection of human rights within each country have a direct bearing on international peace and security. The fundamental significance of democracy, human rights and strong civil societies has been affirmed in the Charter on European Security adopted by the OSCE participating States last year in Istanbul.

The OSCE has proved to be a flexible institution, adapting itself to the far-reaching changes in the political landscape of Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Over the past decade, it has evolved into a vibrant organization with a network of as many as 20 field operations.

Not only in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia, on which I will elaborate later, but also in other parts of the OSCE area, we have been able to achieve concrete results in our continuing efforts for peace and stability. As to conflict prevention, I would like to mention the successful observation mission of the OSCE at the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. We can also register some positive developments concerning the political resolution of "frozen conflicts" in Georgia and in Moldova — conflicts which are often outside the spotlight of broader public attention but nevertheless have a highly destabilizing impact on the region and beyond. Through my frequent travels as Chairperson-in-Office, I wish to enhance the political awareness regarding these unresolved or potential conflicts and security risks. The conflict situation in Chechnya remains unresolved and a matter of great concern.

Let me mention an achievement in the institutional field. An important step in enhancing the civilian crisis management capability of the OSCE was set with the establishment of the Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams (REACT), a programme which should speed up the deployment of highly trained civilian experts to the field.

What are the specific challenges the OSCE is currently facing in the prevention, settlement and management of conflicts? In South-Eastern Europe the work of the Organization focuses in particular on the strengthening of democracy, post-crisis rehabilitation, the rule of law and civil society. The promotion of free and fair elections plays a key role in achieving these goals. The OSCE is tasked with organizing local elections in Kosovo at the end of October this year and, only two weeks thereafter, of general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Kosovo, the OSCE has been involved in the complex task of civil and voter registration, which resulted in more than 1 million registrations. I note with regret that the Kosovo Serbs did not participate in the registration process and that Belgrade would not allow the registration of Kosovo Serbs in Serbia. The OSCE, however, will continue its efforts to bring about active participation of the Kosovo Serbs in democratic political life. We will not lose sight of our common goal of a pluri-ethnic Kosovo.

Kosovo is an excellent example of the new quality of the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE as a distinct component within the overall framework of the United Nations Interim Administration.

A central goal of Austria's chairmanship of the OSCE is to give equal attention to current, and often long-standing, conflicts as well as to potential security risks. In the pursuit of this policy, we support the explicit goal of the OSCE to create a common security space. This implies a strong focus on the Caucasus region and on Central Asia. The OSCE effectively contributes to the alleviation of the suffering of the civilian population in this region, the promotion of political dialogue between warring parties and the monitoring of post-conflict arrangements through observer missions.

Conflict prevention is key to the work of the OSCE in Central Asia. During my most recent visit to the region, I obtained a first-hand impression of its

security problems. In addition to the destabilizing effects of the precarious situation in Afghanistan, the Central Asian region faces manifold transnational threats, such as terrorism, organized crime, illegal arms and drug trafficking and the degradation of the environment, as well as violent extremism and religious fundamentalism.

The OSCE is well placed to support the Central Asian States in their common efforts to deal effectively with these multiple challenges to their security. It acts as a political catalyst supporting the efforts of other, specialized international actors. The international conference, jointly prepared by the OSCE Chairmanship and the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, on the issues of drugs, organized crime and terrorism, to be held in Tashkent on 19 and 20 October is only one example.

I cannot but re-emphasize the importance of the human dimension in the work of the OSCE. In the course of this year we have focused our work on a number of abhorrent facets of civil unrest, such as children in armed conflict, the proliferation of small arms and the trafficking in human beings, particularly women and girls. It is in this context that I would like to highlight the recent adoption of a comprehensive Action Plan for Gender Issues, which will guide the OSCE in its commitment to advance equality between women and men and to protect the human rights of women and girls in the region.

If we analyse the profound changes that have occurred in the recent past, we note that the individual citizen has gained in prominence not only as an actor in our democratic societies, with growing responsibilities in relation to the social, environmental and economic sustainability of our development, but as a victim of new threats to security.

It is noteworthy that the United Nations, the Group of Eight and the OSCE have increasingly moved action against terrorism, drug abuse and crime to the top of their agendas. I am pleased to point out that the negotiations on a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which were held at United Nations Headquarters in Vienna over the past two years, led to a successful outcome in the course of this summer. We are confident that the three additional protocols — on trafficking in and smuggling of persons as well as on trafficking in firearms — will be concluded this fall. Austria, in any case, will strive for a rapid entry into force and implementation of these important legal instruments. We are pleased that the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention will serve as the secretariat for the Conference of the Parties. I stress that my country is ready to join forces with our partners in the developing world to counter organized crime in all its facets.

Thanks to the human development reports of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), our understanding of development has shifted from macro-economic statistics to a more human-centred concept, defining development as a process of broadening the spectrum of choice, both of the individual human being and of society at large. I am pleased that the *Human Development Report 2000* underlines the interrelatedness between human development and human rights. In short, the Report concludes that human development is an essential precondition for the realization of human rights. Human rights, in turn, are an essential prerequisite for comprehensive human development.

If, however, we accept that most challenges to human security have a human rights dimension, we may wish to take a new and more operational look at the promotion and protection of human rights. How can we make our human rights regimes more effective in our societies? The Secretary-General has shown us the path to follow, saying:

> "it is the poison of ignorance, all too frequently, that lies at the heart of human rights violations, knowledge provides an antidote". (Press release SG/SM/6829, 10 December 1998)

Ultimately, it will be citizens themselves who, through better knowledge, become the owners of their human rights.

It is in this context that I would like to point out the initiative taken by all women Ministers for Foreign Affairs present at the opening of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We jointly launched an appeal to our fellow leaders in order to energize our common fight against the global scourge of HIV/AIDS, a scourge which increasingly affects women and girls. Our efforts to counter the HIV/AIDS pandemic must be multifaceted. They must encompass access to adequate medical care, drugs and social protection; they must encompass information and services available to girls and women to help them understand their sexual and reproductive rights in order to protect themselves from

unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. This should be combined with the education of young men to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of health, sexuality and reproduction.

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, spanning the period 1995-2005, was unanimously adopted by this Assembly at its forty-ninth session. We have reached its mid-term and might therefore wish to give it new momentum. We clearly came to understand that human rights education and learning serve as strategies for development on the one hand and as preventive tools for human security on the other.

Following an initiative taken by Austria in the framework of the "Human Security Network" of Foreign Ministers, an International Workshop on Human Security and Human Rights Education was convened in Graz, Austria, early this year. Experts from all continents called for human rights education and learning as a common endeavour of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions. They concluded that human rights education should go beyond formal education so as to encompass all forms of learning and different modes of socialization. Innovative human rights education must be participatory and operational, creative and empowering. It must address all levels of society. All citizens, in particular all persons in positions of leadership, must regard human rights standards as a yardstick when making decisions.

In this context, I applaud the initiatives taken in Africa, South Asia, Latin America and Europe to have municipalities proclaim themselves "Human Rights Cities". I am pleased to announce from this rostrum that the city of Graz will be the first "Human Rights City" in Europe.

While we affirm the universality of our human rights, human rights education and learning will have to be rooted in the rich cultural plurality of the world. In the diversity of learning processes we will better comprehend the common humanity we all share.

Why, it will be asked, do I raise the issue of human rights education and learning at the General Assembly of the United Nations? It is because I am convinced that in this strategic triangle with human security and human development, human rights are of profoundly political significance for the direction we take in our development.

As the acquisition of any political culture takes time, our efforts must be long-term and comprehensive. At the same time, there is a sense of urgency. This is why I appeal to the Assembly to give our efforts in this area a new momentum and new energy and direction. Lately civil society has pleaded for more political leadership in this field. We should be ready to respond and to develop new structures of partnership with civil society and with the institutions already active in the field at national, regional and international levels.

The global house of human rights must be built every day. It must be built by everyone and it must be owned by everyone. Only then will it be a house of prosperity, a house of freedom and a house of peace.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Ural Latypov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus.

Mr. Latypov (Belarus): Let me first welcome Tuvalu as a new Member of the United Nations.

The current session of the General Assembly is an important landmark for the international community. We are still feeling the beat of the Millennium Summit. Our crucial task now is to seek specific ways to implement the provisions of its final Declaration.

In his address to the Summit, President Alyaksandr Lukashenka of Belarus clearly defined an ultimate objective, as we see it, for shaping the image of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, which is to meet the needs and aspirations of our respective nations and seek practical opportunities for real improvement of the quality of life of every single individual. This is the imperative that reality has been dictating to us. It is also the main thrust of the Secretary-General's report (A/54/2000) "We, the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century".

Belarus holds in high respect the unique historic role played by the United Nations in international developments of the second half of the twentieth century. As can be seen from all the Organization's previous experience, a stable, just and prosperous world can only be attained on the basis of the sovereign equality of States, their territorial integrity and political independence, non-interference in their internal affairs

and respect for national traditions. Humanity has had to confront conflict and humanitarian stress every time those principles were disregarded. We believe that they will continue to be of similar importance in the next century.

Just as was the case 55 years ago, there is hardly a more pressing task for the United Nations than the maintenance of international peace. All Member States have equal rights to peaceful and sustainable development. Thus the security of no State, whether small island country or super-Power, can be achieved through disrespect for the interests of others.

The Republic of Belarus is committed to its choice of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe in the generosity and great meaning of the initiative by the head of our State to establish a nuclear-weapon-free space in Central and Eastern Europe. We are confident that in due time this idea will receive a sufficient number of proponents.

During this session Belarus has deposited its instruments for ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the additional Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons. At the same time, a continuing absence of visible consensus within the United Nations on the key issues of the international disarmament process is becoming a dismaying reality. To exit this dead end would essentially require setting priorities and embarking upon an active dialogue aimed at achieving progress in both nuclear and conventional disarmament. Five million victims over the past decade — is this not serious enough to make real action imperative?

It is crucial to maintain and consolidate the strategic global parity built under the complex conditions of the twentieth century. In this regard, preservation of and respect for the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is a logical basis for the maintenance of international stability. Its violation could result in an extremely dangerous disruption of the established set of interdependent agreements in this area. The Republic of Belarus will again sponsor the resolution on the ABM Treaty during this session.

The time-span between the two most recent sessions of the General Assembly has been marked by the United Nations active involvement in the peaceful settlement of disputes, post-conflict peace-building and rehabilitation. We observe with satisfaction the actions taken by the Security Council, more resolutely and consistently than in the past, with respect to such complex situations as conflicts in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Angola and East Timor. My country has been following with hope the developments in the Middle East. We believe that the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Southern Lebanon and the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks will favour the resolution of the crisis in the region.

For over a quarter of a century attempts have been made to break a stalemate in the settlement of the Cyprus problem. It is crucial that the United Nations continue its work to resolve this crisis on the basis of the appropriate resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The development of specific preventive measures for the elimination of root causes of potential conflicts should be the focus of United Nations attention in the near future. It is important to make irreversible the growing trend in international efforts to define universal mechanisms and specify practical measures of conflict prevention and crisis management. The activities of the Panel of experts headed by Ambassador Brahimi, in addition to the upcoming Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, are an important contribution thereto.

As the Secretary-General has rightly observed, the very credibility of the Organization as regards playing a decisive role in the war and peace process is at stake. In this respect, the Republic of Belarus has been and remains firmly committed to the preservation of the primary role played by the Security Council in decision-making on actions to avert threats to peace and security. Viewed from that perspective, further improvement in the working methods of the Council and reform of its membership on the basis of equitable geographic representation are not merely an important task, but a pressing imperative.

Belarus reconfirms its determination to constructively contribute to the activities of the Council should my country be elected as a non-permanent member for the period 2002-2003.

The tremendous benefits of globalization will be reduced to nothing unless there is a clear understanding of the dire need for the international community to learn a common language — that is, the language of

law. In recent years we have witnessed practical demonstrations of situations in which even the slightest deviation from internationally accepted norms would inevitably present an extreme danger not only for the violators themselves, but also for the entire international community. It is an encouraging fact that since its outset the United Nations has gained significant potential by accumulating all the far-reaching ideas, hopes and aspirations of humankind for building a better world.

Implementing the norms of international law at the national level should become a priority for the United Nations and its partners. Today my country is a party to the United Nations most important conventions and treaties. The establishment of a legislative model based on the United Nations Charter and international treaties and conventions, complemented by national legislation, is the objective we must all strive for.

The stability of the interdependent world is hardly attainable when the system of international politics is perceived solely as the domination of one State or interaction among separate groups of States. Differences in social and economic advancement will persist for a long time. Therefore, in a globalizing world the United Nations should play a more active role in promoting the economic development and social progress of all countries.

Belarus supports a sharper focus in international efforts on the problems of the developing countries, particularly in Africa. We also deem it expedient to take into account the needs of countries with economies in transition, which would by no means soften the focus on the problems of the developing world. We see no contradiction in such an interlinkage, as appropriate goals and objectives to this end could only be formulated jointly with the United Nations.

The Republic of Belarus shares the apprehensions expressed by many States over the environmental future of our planet. In this regard, we perceive as highly indicative the debates at the Millennium Summit and at the Summit meeting of the Security Council. Belarus has signed and ratified a number of important international agreements in the area of environmental protection, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Against this background, we continue to be acutely sensitive to the ever-diminishing interest by the international community in the Chernobyl disaster, the world's largest technological catastrophe of the past century, to which Belarus fell a major victim. In this regard, I should like to quote once more from the address by the President of our country at the Millennium Summit:

> "Without awareness of our joint responsibility for preserving the common human environment, all discussions of a fair distribution of the benefits and disadvantages of globalization will remain just shallow talk." (*A/55/PV.4*)

We are confident that the United Nations, which has so far contributed significantly to assisting our people in the relevant area, will be in a position to find new sources and mechanisms to help Belarus overcome the Chernobyl tragedy.

The ideas of democracy and respect for human rights can certainly play a key role in continuous human development in the twenty-first century. Yet to make this goal attainable, it is essential to relinquish attempts to use those principles to discriminate among peoples and "punish" unwelcome States and Governments. Regrettably, we must note a certain involvement by the United Nations in efforts to establish a "club of countries of advanced democracy" on the basis of some random criteria. It is inadmissible that the idea of the forum of new and restored democracies approved within our Organization should lead to the separation of peoples into teachers and pupils.

The principle standpoint of Belarus on this issue is the following: a truly democratic world can only be based on an equal dialogue among different civilizations.

This year is of special significance to the development of democracy in my country. Parliamentary elections due in October will be held in full conformity with democratic standards. We have invited international observers to monitor the elections and look forward to seeing them carried out and contributing in real terms to democratic development in Belarus.

Each session of the United Nations General Assembly is a milestone in the evolution of the United Nations itself and the development of the system of international politics as a whole. In that sense, the current session has been endowed with very special

powers. It is up to us all to determine how much the United Nations will be able to show that the hopes and aspirations of our nations at the dawn of the new century were justified. In the discharge of these noble duties, the international community can invariably count on a due contribution by the Republic of Belarus.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Juan Esteban Aguirre Martínez, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Paraguay.

Mr. Aguirre Martínez (Paraguay) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Before I begin, I should like to make a personal comment. As a former official of the United Nations Population Fund, I should like to express my great pride and personal satisfaction at being able to speak to the Assembly today and to address those countries with which I have worked, together with my other colleagues in the United Nations. All of us, of course, share a hope that our dream of a better world will come true.

It is a great source of satisfaction to see the President preside over the work of this Assembly, familiar as I am with his great personal and professional skills, which guarantee the success of our work. I should also like to express to his predecessor, Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab, our gratitude and recognition of the efficient work he has done. Similarly, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the detailed report on the work of the Organization that he has presented. It describes the important work carried out by the United Nations over the past year as well as the challenges for the future.

I should also like to express on behalf of my Government our pleasure at the entry of Tuvalu as a new Member of our Organization. This is an important step forward along the road of universality, which is the aspiration we all share.

The recently concluded Millennium Summit was a useful instrument for reflection by our Heads of State upon the present and future of the Organization. This Organization must adapt its structures and mechanisms for action to the new challenges facing humanity. I am certain that the numerous suggestions that have been made will help establish clear lines of action so the United Nations can operate more efficiently and effectively.

At the last summit of the Rio Group, which took place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, the Heads of State who comprise this political consultation mechanism endorsed the Cartagena Declaration as our singular contribution to the Millennium Summit and to the future of the United Nations. It is our intention to ensure appropriate follow-up to the initiatives and aspirations expressed in this document in order to make certain that they become a reality in the future for the benefit of all humanity in terms of democracy, trade flows, better dynamics in international relations in terms of human security and the pursuit of multilateral solutions.

I fully agree with the Secretary-General of our Organization when he says that the conclusion of one century and the turn of the millennium provide us with a unique vantage point for reflecting upon our common destiny. Fifty-five years have passed since the creation of the United Nations, and during that period we have seen many auspicious as well as many worrying events. Let us pause for a moment and think about all the good that we have done and the good that we have failed to do, as well as upon what we have done wrong or should not have done.

The conclusion of the cold war, of which this Organization was one of the most important theatres, seemed to herald a period of peace and prosperity for humanity, in fulfilment of the Biblical mandate to beat our swords into plowshares. Nevertheless, humanity is still facing terrible threats, not only to its security — because war and violence persist in new and more sophisticated forms — but also threats to its very existence, in light of the prospect that our planet may become uninhabitable as a result of human activities.

Consequently, in the new millennium the United Nations will be equally if not more important than it was in the previous millennium. Our Organization must of course adapt to new times. The reform of our Organization cannot be postponed any further. The structures of its main organs must adapt to the new characteristics of the international community, with the increasing number of nations which belong to it. We must adapt to the increasing role of civil society, the spread of the system of representative democracy, the globalization of our world markets and the intolerable persistence of serious social deficits in most of our States.

In particular, our Organization must adapt so that our efforts towards development are rendered appropriate for each individual wherever he or she may live and wherever his or her community may be located, and wherever we want to see our families grow.

The human being as the centre of development will continue to be at the centre of our mandate, as well as the commitments assumed by each and every one of our countries at summits of the United Nations over the past decade. The efforts made by each man, woman or child to take advantage of the opportunities offered by global markets and new economic trends is first and foremost a local and community effort and secondly a national effort, which can create opportunities for growth and ensure participation for each man and each woman.

The reorganization of the United Nations, and in particular its system of development, must ensure that it can respond creatively and flexibly to these community and national efforts. This will make it possible progressively to improve for each individual daily access to health, education, sanitation services, technology and reasonable credit, as well as the equitable participation of women in productive activities. In that way, we can ensure the integration of all our citizens into the global market and make certain they can benefit from this process.

It is vital that the cooperation activities of the United Nations be well structured and have a real impact on our populations, in particular women, children and adolescents. It is essential that these activities create an environment of national dialogue in each of our countries with a view to harmonizing views on development and creating consensus on the means for achieving growth, in order to give true meaning to social and productive investments and to meet the qualitative demands of civil society.

National consensus must necessarily be the basis for global consensus, and today more than ever it must be the basis for consensus among integrated groups that wish to negotiate with each other. However, a reorganized and renewed United Nations, in the ultimate analysis, must be the guarantor of the well-being of each of our citizens. The United Nations exists so that all of our citizens can benefit from new trends in trade, development and technology in order to achieve growth as individuals and as families and to improve their quality of life and feel that they live in a better world where their sons and daughters will be able to continue to grow, in peace.

Turning to another subject, we are concerned about the delay in the adoption of a decision about the future composition of the Security Council, because we feel that its enlargement cannot be postponed. Its composition must become more equitable and representative and allow for a better political balance. This gradual process of democratization must begin with an increase in both categories of members, permanent and non-permanent, and it should also include both developed and developing countries. Special attention should be given to the fact that the developing countries are now under-represented in that very important body. Paraguay also believes that this reform should include the gradual elimination of the veto rights of the permanent members.

We welcome the Brahimi report, which establishes a valid framework for the reform and strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Paraguay has always supported such operations as a fundamental mechanism contributing to world peace and security.

I should also like to refer to the regular budget of the Organization, in connection with the aspirations of some developed countries to reduce their contributions to a lower percentage. We believe that this should not mean that the assessed contributions of developing countries would increase to unprecedented percentages, even though the figures involved may seem to others modest or insignificant. It is paradoxical that some developed countries would have their contributions reduced precisely when they are enjoying excellent economic growth, while other countries that are experiencing difficulties would see an increase in their contributions.

It is in this context that we must seriously study the scale of assessments so that when we adopt it this year we will achieve a fair and equitable distribution of the financial burden of this Organization. We hope that together we will find balanced solutions and equitable formulas and timetables for redistributing the budgetary burden so that we can promote and reactivate the participation of large and small States in our Organization.

International relations have acquired a new dimension as a result of the revolution in computer

technology, telecommunications and communications in general. The effect of this is what we call globalization, which has both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand it has produced a change in the consciousness of human beings, who for the first time feel they are part of a whole — that is, of humanity in its entirety. On the other hand, it has increased the divide between the poorest countries and the more advanced countries owing to the advantages accruing to those that are better prepared for the dismantling of national barriers. In these conditions, solidarity takes on a new urgency. It is an act of justice for those peoples who see all their potential progress subordinated to this process.

In this regard, we fully agree with recent statements made by the representative of the Holy See during the special session of the General Assembly on social development, to the effect that the benefits of great scientific advances must be shared by all peoples and should not be enjoyed exclusively by the few. Otherwise we will merely be perpetuating differences and widening the gap between rich and poor countries.

We know that decades of development assistance under past conditions have not succeeded very well in eradicating poverty and cultural backwardness in vast regions of the world. Nevertheless, this should not become a pretext for reducing the amount of development assistance, especially multilateral assistance, nor should we see any increase in conditionality. We believe fully in the multilateral approach, and we should totally reject conditionality when determining how to provide development assistance. Nor do we wish to justify the lack of good governance in many nations, which has meant in some cases that efforts were wasted to a great extent and only fuelled corruption and caused the loss of age-old, noble traditional practices.

In the recent elections for the vice-presidency of the Republic, my country demonstrated once again the preference of our region for representative democracy. In the elections, which all observers considered exemplary because of the discipline, civic spirit and participation shown by the citizens, we saw the election of the opposition candidate, of the radical liberal party, Mr. Julio César Franco. The fact that two parties, until now adversaries, can share power is far from negative. Rather, it constitutes an opportunity to establish lasting political stability through the establishment of a Government of national unity that can efficiently foster the institutional and economic reforms needed in our country in order to achieve sustained progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude — to the international community, to our friends in the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Rio Group, the European Union and the Organization of American States, and to the United States of America, Japan, the Republic of China and other countries around the world — for their constant support for our process of democratization. I would like to say to all of them that thanks to their efforts Paraguay is continuing along the road to democratic growth.

We are certain that the spread of democracy and the increasing exercise of its freedoms by peoples will bring greater effectiveness to our State institutions in the short term. This, together with the increasing role of the private sector, can create fertile ground for investment and the transformation of productive activities in a large part of the world, leading to a reduction in unemployment and poverty.

International cooperation, for its part, must establish clear priorities and offer what each of us needs. It cannot be simply humanitarian aid, although humanitarian aid is fully justified in emergency situations. Instead, international cooperation should be aimed at the integral, sustainable development of peoples. These are two words that are used and misused — "integral" and "sustainable". When we say "integral", we understand it to mean that aid must try to come to grips with the entire set of development problems of each country and of each individual, in order to guarantee respect for human rights — not only political rights but also economic and social rights; and merely partial solutions should not be offered.

When we say "sustainable" we mean that assistance must not become an addiction for the beneficiaries. It should empower them to continue along the road to progress relying on their own efforts and should guarantee growth for future generations.

Combating poverty means building peace. The security of the world must be based on the elimination of the underlying causes of violence, two of the principal causes being ignorance and poverty. This does not exempt us, however, from taking effective measures to limit the use of the instruments of violence, from their most deadly form, such as

weapons of mass destruction, to the more conventional, including small arms. In the latter case, my country supports the initiative to establish an international legal instrument with specific measures to check the illegal trade in such weapons.

The preservation of our natural environment is a great source of concern and a subject for reflection. Paraguay, like many other developing countries, gives extremely high priority in its national policies to preserving the integrity and diversity of our natural heritage, handed on by our ancestors. This is not only because on it depends our current and future wealth, but also because we are fully aware of our grave responsibility to all humanity, since we are the guardians of resources needed for its very survival.

Paraguay reaffirms its resolve to continue respecting and implementing the principles established in Agenda 21. In this regard, we attach high priority to the participation of the States parties in the legal framework developed during the implementation phase of the Agenda. With great pride I report that Paraguay is a fully fledged party to the most important international agreements on the environment.

In this area, finally, it is important to mention the need to come to grips with the grave problem of the unsustainable use of water resources. It is necessary to intensify scientific cooperation and research in order to reduce the effects of environmental disasters, both natural and man-made.

We believe that an equitable and fair trade system is vital for our development. In this regard, we reject any intent to perpetuate protectionist measures in the developed countries, particularly subsidies for agricultural production and exports, as well as the use of technical regulations as trade barriers against manufactured products. We claim our right to free access to the world's markets for those goods in which we are competitive.

On this occasion, as we highlight the importance of reaffirming our commitment to this Organization, I believe it is appropriate to stress the essential role that the international legal framework can play in the achievement of our common objectives. In this regard, the Government of Paraguay has paid special attention to the invitation by the Secretary-General to all Member States to take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen our support for the international legal framework by signing, ratifying or acceding to treaties deposited with him that bear a special relationship to the spirit and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

In this respect, I am very pleased to announce that on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Paraguay I have signed the following international instruments: the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child — on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. I should also note that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, of which Paraguay was one of the first signatories, is in the process of parliamentary approval.

I conclude by reaffirming the conviction of my country's firm belief in the United Nations, which is more necessary than ever in order to meet the great challenges of peace and development, which, despite significant progress, continue to be an urgent need of a great part of humanity.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Li Hyong Chol, Chairman of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) *(spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation)*: On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I should like first of all to congratulate Mr. Harri Holkeri on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I believe that the present session will produce the desired results under his leadership. I pay tribute to his predecessor Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, who made a great contribution to the successful conclusion of the fifty-fourth session. I wish also to express our great appreciation for the efforts made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to strengthen the role of the United Nations.

The central role of the United Nations in the new century should be to establish international relations and order to make the new century independent, peaceful and prosperous. No country can either defend its national dignity or achieve social and economic development when its national sovereignty is violated.

This is the lesson for mankind on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

It is the common aspiration of the world's peoples that the twenty-first century should be a century of independence, peace and development. Genuine peace and prosperity on our planet can be achieved only when the sovereignty of all countries is respected.

We regard independence as our life and soul. The idea of independence runs through all domestic and foreign policies and lines of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This is the brilliant embodiment of the independent policy of the great leader General Kim Jong Il. The reality prevailing on the Korean peninsula clearly testifies to the justness of the independent policies consistently carried out by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Without independence, it is unthinkable that our country could overcome the manifold difficulties and advance the building of a powerful nation convincingly along the road chosen by its people.

The independent foreign policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea makes a tangible contribution to peace and stability in North-East Asia. It can be said that it is entirely because of our firm adherence to independence that our country has been able to play a buffer-zone role effectively in the intersection of the divergent geopolitical interests of several countries. We take pride in the independent foreign policy of our Government, as it contributes to maintaining the balance of power and preventing a war in North-East Asia.

The independent policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also gives full play to its vitality in advancing the cause of peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula. The General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session in 1973 unanimously welcomed the three principles of independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity which had been agreed upon by the north and the south of the Korean peninsula. These three principles of national reunification are the grand programme of reunification put forward by President Kim Il Sung, the great leader of our people, and constitute the most essential component of the three-point charter for national reunification defined by the respected General Kim Jong Il.

At the historic Pyongyang meeting in June this year, the leaders of the North and the South reaffirmed these three principles of national reunification, and on this basis the North-South joint declaration on solving the reunification question independently by the concerted efforts of our nation was made public. The summit meeting and the resulting joint declaration represent a historic milestone, marking a turning-point in achieving the cause of independent reunification of our nation.

Amidst the increased spirit of national independence and reunification, North-South ministerial talks for reconciliation and collaboration are being held and the reunions of separated families realized. Mutual visits between the North and the South through, inter alia, direct flights between Pyongyang and Seoul are now commonplace, and a project is underway to re-link the railways between the North and the South of Korea.

This is the brilliant fruition of our independent policy and the result of a warm love for the nation and strong desire for reunification. It is none other than the Korean nation that is responsible for Korea's reunification question. Korea's reunification should be achieved independently by the concerted efforts of the Koreans in the North and the South, as stated in the North-South joint declaration. Reunification will come about if both sides take realistic and practical measures for establishing a reunified State by making the most of common elements of the federation and the confederation proposed by the North and the South respectively.

The independent reunification of our nation will surely lead to a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, and we believe that this will in turn contribute to peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world.

The turning point created on the Korean peninsula is a positive development of global significance. We consider that the present trend towards the improvement of North-South relations and reunification is a process that should be valued for the sake of peace and security in North-East Asia as well. If this process is to continue to gain momentum, the countries concerned should work in support of the process, rather than disturbing it.

The United States has created our non-existent "missile threat" in order to justify the establishment of its "theatre missile defense" and "national missile

defense" systems. Nevertheless, it gives rise to worldwide concern about its danger.

Our missile programme is of a peaceful nature, for all intents and purposes. All countries have an equal sovereign right, recognized by the United Nations, to conduct research on and make use of the outer space. It is therefore totally unfair for the United States to take issue only with our rockets while many other countries are launching their own space rockets. If hostile relations are removed and confidence is built between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, there will be ways to address the concerns on both sides.

The recent incident that prevented the President of the Presidium of our Supreme People's Assembly from attending the Millennium Summit is, after all, the manifestation of the continued hostile policy pursued by the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in labelling our country a "terrorism-sponsoring nation". In this regard, we note that the United States has recognized its responsibility for the incident and given assurances that such incidents would not occur again. We also note the recently stated United States position that it has no reason to perpetuate its hostile relations with our country. If this position is put into practice, we will be ready to respond in a positive way at any time.

Another factor that casts a shadow on positive development on the Korean peninsula is the suspicious future of Japan. Whether Japan revives its militarist spectre or becomes a peace-loving country is a serious question directly linked to peace and stability in Asia, particularly in its neighbouring Korean peninsula. Continued evasion by Japan on settling its past with our country is the main factor that makes us suspicious of its future orientation. Moreover, such suspicion is increased as we witness Japanese moves to find pretexts for justifying its rearmament by targeting our country as its "enemy".

Should Japan take the path of militarism, it will obviously strain its relations with other Asian countries and exert negative effects on the improvement of North-South relations. We hope Japan will not go in this direction. Japan should find its future in a sincere and early settlement of its past. Now that the North-South joint declaration is being smoothly implemented, new, sound international relations will be established in North-East Asia once the hostile relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan, are resolved.

In conformity with this encouraging process, the United Nations should also take practical measures to dismantle the "United Nations Command", a legacy of the cold war, thus making a due contribution to this process.

In order to establish fair international relations and an international order that will properly represent the new century, it is important to successfully overcome the challenges to the United Nations Charter. The most serious challenge posed in international relations at present is the emergence of the concept of "humanitarian intervention".

The United Nations is based on the principle of sovereign equality. The Charter enshrines the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs as a cornerstone of international relations.

These are the major principles based on the reality in which big and small countries exist in the world. All countries aspire to independence and struggle to defend their national sovereignty. Encroachment upon the sovereignty of small countries by big Powers in exercise of power politics is an act of high-handedness, as already judged by the times. "Humanitarian intervention" is a dangerous concept that could beautify such acts of high-handedness and eliminate the essential spirit of the Charter.

The international relations of the new century should serve to terminate arbitrariness and high-handedness, such as threatening sovereign States by force and imposing sanctions on them, and to fully implement the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. International peace and security should be achieved by strengthening the role of the United Nations, not by arbitrariness, high-handedness and intervention by any individual big Power.

The role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, should be enhanced. Despite an ever-growing desire and expectation by international society for disarmament after the end of the cold war, the disarmament process is at a standstill, faced with new challenges. Reality requires that the nuclear disarmament process be turned into a United Nations process, instead of being left to

the nuclear-weapon States alone. We are of the view that the fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament should be held as early as possible, taking into due consideration the demand of a large number of countries.

Another challenge to be effectively countered by the United Nations in international relations is an attempt to politicize the human rights issue. Along with the use of force, the human rights issue constitutes one of the two factors straining international relations. This is demonstrated in the reality in which United Nations meetings that address human rights issues are often converted into an arena of confrontation, not cooperation. In fact, there is no more grave human rights violation than abusing the human rights issue for political purposes. The United Nations should enhance its role decisively to ensure that fairness is fully observed, and not acquiesce in the application of double standards when dealing with human rights issues.

The twenty-first century should be a century of development. Durable international peace and security are inconceivable without the eradication of poverty and the solution of social and economic problems. A fair international economic order which is conducive to sustainable economic development for the developing countries should be established as early as possible. In particular, it is imperative that the United Nations further the analysis and assessment of the nature and danger of globalization, as well as its impact on the developing countries, and take necessary measures. In this regard, we believe that the Declaration and Action Programme adopted at the South Summit held in Cuba last April can serve as an excellent basis for that purpose.

In order for the United Nations to play a role commensurate with the requirements of the new century, it should be democratized through reform of its structure. The main purpose of United Nations reform is to ensure democracy and strict observance of the principles of justice and fairness in all its activities.

The General Assembly has now been relatively democratized, but it does not have sufficient authority. In contrast, the Security Council has authority and action capability but falls short of the desired degree of democracy. In particular, the present structure of the Security Council leaves a vacuum which allows the United Nations to be used as a tool of high-handedness, for the Council monopolizes decision-making power on such critical issues as enforcement action, including the use of force. The twentieth century witnessed such cases on several occasions.

We hold that the enhancement of the authority of the General Assembly is a prerequisite for ensuring democracy in United Nations activities. The Assembly must be empowered at least to review the issues of international peace and security and to approve major decisions and resolutions of the Security Council on these issues.

In reforming the Security Council, priority should be given to increasing the number of non-permanent seats, thus correcting the present imbalance in regional representation. It is also imperative that effective ways be sought to ensure strict observance of the principles of justice and fairness in United Nations activities.

We consider that one means to this end will be to restore the confidence of the international community in the United Nations by redressing those issues mishandled in the past by the United Nations, in contradiction to the purposes and principles of its Charter, by force of arbitrariness and high-handedness.

Independence, peace and friendship are the fundamental ideas of the foreign policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic will remain true to this idea and faithfully discharge its obligations as a Member State of the United Nations, so that the United Nations can become a truly effective organization that creditably serves the aspirations and requirements of the new century.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Bartoszewski (Poland) *(spoke in Polish; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Allow me first of all to congratulate Mr. Harri Holkeri on his election as President of the Millennium session of the General Assembly. The Polish delegation expresses its satisfaction that the presidency of this session has been entrusted to an eminent statesman from Finland, a country with which we have ties of friendship and cooperation based on common values and aspirations. He may count on my delegation's full cooperation in the performance of his important tasks.

My congratulations also to the Assembly's outgoing President, Minister Theo-Ben Guribab, for the outstanding commitment and skill he displayed during his presidency.

On behalf of Poland, allow me also to welcome to the United Nations the new Member, Tuvalu.

I should also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the outstanding manner in which he has demonstrated his qualities of leadership and good judgement, and in particular for his inspirational report, "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century".

Although the start of the new millennium is still a few months away, a new era actually began a little earlier. It was marked by the demise of the world's ideological polarization into East and West and division into three worlds, and by the emergence of the world economy. Humankind enters this new era, the age of globalization, with the immense opportunity to expand the spheres of freedom and prosperity brought by the triumph of democracy and advances in technology, especially the achievements of the information revolution.

Behind us we have left the twentieth century, an age of extremes and profound contradictions. It was an age of man's triumphs and downfalls, alternating setbacks and advances in the evolution of the international community. On the one hand, we have witnessed of amazing scientific, technological and material progress, the spread of human rights and democracy and the development of universal international institutions. On the other hand, it was also an age of the most horrendous dramas in contemporary human history, of the tragedies, atrocities and devastation of two world wars, of the utmost contempt for the human being, and of genocide and blind violence perpetrated by utopias intent on thus building "brave new worlds". The Polish poet and Nobel laureate in literature in 1980, Czeslaw Milosz, wrote in *The Witness of History* that the twentieth century's original contribution to the history of the human race was "the near disappearance of the concept of values" and concluded: "The extermination camp became the central fact of the century."

Nonetheless, the end of this century seems to bring more optimism. This is not only the assessment of the Foreign Minister of reborn and democratic Poland. It is also the personal feeling of a man who, having been a prisoner of two totalitarian systems, the Nazi and the Communist — incidentally, I am, I think, the only Foreign Minister to hold this "distinction" — has known the sufferings specific to this century, and it reflects the hope ingrained in human nature. But as well as destruction and hatred, I have also been, since as long ago as the days of the Holocaust, a witness of and participant in a struggle for the dignity and the rights of the human being and the process of my country's recovery of independence and arduous construction of democracy.

My history of active participation in transforming the conditions of human existence, in its individual and collective dimension, began in the yard of the concentration camp of Auschwitz. Later, enlistment in the Polish resistance and, in particular, participation in assistance for the inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto. Next, the unimaginable inferno of the Warsaw uprising in 1944 and the death, as it seemed at the time, of Warsaw. Finally, the end of the war. I remember the joy and hope with which we greeted the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They gave me strength when I found myself having to survive the ordeal of years in Communist jails. From them, too, I drew inspiration on the journey that eventually led me and my political friends to Gdansk, the city for which our allies were unwilling to die in 1939 and in which the next great turning-point in the history of the past century was launched in 1980.

Indeed, two weeks ago we celebrated in Poland the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the Solidarity movement, the Polish revolution that was at first suppressed at gunpoint by the totalitarian regime but that, becoming an emblem of hope, weathered repression and an unfavourable set of international circumstances. The rebirth of Solidarity in 1989 and the Polish Round Table opened the way to historic changes, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Communist bloc, and in consequence set in motion a sweeping transformation of the international system. Having been involved for over 60 years in these processes, as a writer, historian, university lecturer and, currently, Foreign Minister, I feel — if the Assembly will forgive the personal tone of this confession — as if I were a living, physical symbol of humanity's stormy voyage through the history of the past century.

But let me also say that the traumatic experiences of my nation have made the Poles exceptionally aware of the value of peace and any manifestations of good that are lastingly present in international life. Making our contribution to the positive culmination of the twentieth century and working towards the revitalization of the message of the United Nations, and thereby opening up new prospects for the Organization, we see ourselves as full and active members of the global family of nations. A further source of the sense of security and confidence that fortifies us in this role within the United Nations is that we have become a member of the North Atlantic Alliance and are forging ever-closer ties with the European Union, which we expect to join in the near future.

Bolstered by our accomplishments in the past decade, having reclaimed our place on the international stage, we are eager to participate together with other nations in this generally perceptible shift towards values. A yearning for a world imbued with moral values is visible in all civilizations and religions. This is especially evident in the waning of the unlawful use of force in international life. The recent outbreaks seen here and there are an echo of divisions and conflicts that are fading along with the twentieth century. This positive tendency can be observed in Europe, in the Middle East, in North-East Asia and in other parts of the world. Contributing to it is a growing respect for human rights and appreciation of the economic and social factors involved in their full achievement.

Against this background, the Polish people hold in great esteem the peace mission of John Paul II, the Pope from Poland — a Pope whose pontificate, like the whole course of his life, personifies, beacon-like, an unwavering adherence to values and, through the symbol of open arms, understanding and reconciliation. The Pope's position not only fills us with pride but is also a model for our international behaviour. The bearings guiding our actions, including here in the United Nations, are tolerance, openness and respect for the dignity and rights of the individual, minorities and whole nations. We are determined to oppose every kind of discrimination and prejudice, whether on ethnic, national, religious or social grounds. In this cause, Poland is and will continue to be a staunch ally of the United Nations.

We are entering the twenty-first century with the immense potential generated by the newest phase of the revolution in science, technology, mass communications, the opening up of frontiers, the development of inter-societal ties and the universalization of democracy and human rights. Most of these phenomena are encompassed by the common term "globalization". For a number of years, assessment of their consequences has, especially in the wake of regional financial crises, been growing increasingly contentious. Sometimes they are treated as a force of nature sweeping all before them, as morally neutral processes that can do good or harm and that eventually will bring prosperity to all peoples or be a source of crises, inequality and instability within nations and on an international scale.

Globalization has unquestionably beneficial effects in the sphere of trade, production, the spread of modern technologies and capital flows. The liberalization of international trade, the growth of world output and the prosperity of societies should bring a more equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization. At the same time, there are looming dangers, harmful side-effects and new problems whose scale and nature we are not yet capable of identifying correctly. The challenge facing us is to work together to steer these processes in such a way that it is their blessings that are mainly felt by humanity, and that they are prevented from creating new divides in the world. We must do everything in our power, including here at the United Nations, to ensure that these processes mean the globalization of good.

Faced with the opportunities, but also the threats, presented by the evolution of human civilization at the threshold of the third millennium, the international community needs to organize around a question of basic importance to the direction of its future development. That was the purpose of the Government of Poland when it decided, together with the Governments of Chile, India, the Republic of Korea, Mali, the United States and the Czech Republic, to initiate broader international collaboration in the cause of consolidation and promotion of democracy in the world.

In this gathering there is no need to argue the virtues of democracy. No one disputes the positive interrelationship between democracy and human rights, internal and international peace, economic growth and prosperity and better realization of the principles of justice and solidarity. At the same time, we cannot ignore the threats to democracy, which are primarily of

an internal nature. They affect countries in the process of democratic transition as well as so-called mature democracies. They cover a wide spectrum, ranging from poverty and economic underdevelopment, ethnic conflicts and organized crime to corruption and the exclusion of whole sectors of public life, notably finance and the media, from democratic control, which saps the foundations of democracy and demeans it in the eyes of society. Democracy, its condition and prospects, can and should be no less a legitimate subject of international debate and cooperation than the other great issues of our times: human rights, disarmament, the environment and the like.

Imbued with this belief, we embarked, in conjunction with a number of other States, on organizing in June of this year an international conference, "Towards a Community of Democracies". A total of 107 States accepted our invitation. Speaking at the Warsaw conference, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said,

> "One of the greatest challenges to humankind in the new century will be the struggle to make the practice of democracy equally universal. In that struggle, nations in which democracy is already well established will need to be vigilant in preserving that achievement".

The participants in the conference adopted the Warsaw Declaration in which they reaffirmed their commitment to its catalogue of democratic values and standards. They also undertook to pursue informal cooperation to strengthen and promote democracy in various international organizations. For obvious reasons, the key question will be what can be done to advance this cause in the framework of and through the United Nations.

Let me take this opportunity to recall another Polish initiative that also falls within the current of responses to the harmful side effects of globalization processes. In 1996, at the General Assembly, Poland submitted a proposal to frame a universal legal instrument, the first of its kind, that could help us combat one of the greatest dangers of our times: international organized crime. At this session the text of that Convention will be presented to the General Assembly for its approval.

The central issue of successive international agendas is security. Though preserving international peace and security is the main purpose of the United Nations, States have also looked to other ways to ensure their security: through creation of balance-of-power systems, arms races and even the use of force. Today we are trying to achieve such goals by different means. Anachronistic doctrines of geopolitics and spheres of influence are now fading into history. The Roman maxim, "If you want peace, prepare for war" — *Si vis pacem para bellum* — is becoming irrelevant. Nevertheless, the problem of security remains a pressing one, as the numerous conflicts and humanitarian dramas in various parts of the world make all too clear. In addition to crises and wars inherited from the old international order, we are plagued by conflicts which spring from poverty, ethnic and religious strife or the atrophying of States' ability to perform their basic functions: providing the people living within their borders with internal security and decent conditions of existence.

This new situation, in which security depends not so much on purely military factors as on social stability, on observance of human rights and the rights of national minorities or on access to drinking water, enhances the role of the United Nations, which can draw on unique experience and a wide range of non-military instruments for ensuring security. Fuller involvement by the United Nations in the security sphere as provided in the mandate deriving from its Charter requires determined continuation of reform of the Organization in this field, starting with a practical redefinition of the role of the Security Council that would extend its purview to non-traditional threats to international security.

The Security Council must do what, in accordance with the Charter, is expected of it by Members and respond more decisively to signs of budding conflicts or humanitarian disasters. The Kosovo drama, like many others, could have been avoided if Security Council members had displayed sufficient imagination and resolve at the right time. That would also have enabled us to avoid last year's arguments and controversies over the issue of humanitarian intervention. The inability of the Security Council to respond robustly in such situations will open the way to further precedents for sidestepping the Charter and United Nations mechanisms in the security sphere and could thereby lead to disintegration of this system.

The success and effectiveness of the proposals and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's Millennium report will depend on the determination of the Security Council as the system's lynch-pin. Poland endorses the report's perspective on international problems and approach to tackling them. We are in favour of stronger legal instruments for stabilizing the international order; this refers to situations involving threats to security and use of force, to respect for human rights and to arms control and limitation. In all these areas we must preserve the primacy of the United Nations system over regional or unilateral measures, which are acceptable only in the exceptional circumstances in which the Security Council and United Nations mechanisms are found wanting.

In this context I should also like to pay tribute to the Brahimi report on United Nations peace operations. As a long-standing and very active participant in United Nations peacekeeping missions, Poland is in favour of streamlining the machinery for conducting them — from decision-making to presence in the field — and ensuring their greater effectiveness by widening and making more adequate the array of instruments with which such operations are equipped. This means both the possibility of the use of force by the units deployed in an operation and a wide spectrum of peace-building and post-conflict rehabilitation capabilities. I refer also to action aimed at advancing human rights and laying the groundwork for democracy in the institutional and civil society sphere. In our view, in further work on the recommendations of the report, greater emphasis should be put on the question of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, an area in which lie many hitherto untapped opportunities, as well on as a more creative approach to conflict prevention.

We no longer seek foundations for a future international order in military capacities, but to an ever greater degree we are trying to build it on fair and respected laws. The maxim *Si vis pacem para iustitiam* which adorns the facade of the Palace of Justice in The Hague no longer has quite the idealistic ring that it had several decades ago. But we are also aware that though administering justice through law is an indispensable condition of peace, it is not yet a sufficient condition. Our times, in which conflicts and instability are often a result of poverty and underdevelopment, require the application of a new maxim, a contemporary paraphrase of the old ones: *Si vis pacem para solidaritatem*.

Here, we are entering the domain of the international economic order, in particular its financial and trade dimensions. This is a sphere in which the United Nations system must be much more active than hitherto or run the risk of being sidelined by the new and powerful non-State actors in international life. The recently fashionable, if ill-defined, formula of global governance should at the practical level be developed in the United Nations framework or in concert with, not parallel or counter to, the United Nations. First and foremost, it is essential to intensify international efforts to promote stability and predictability in international economic relations, which includes strengthening the new international financial architecture of a system and institutions based on transparent rules.

What is also needed — and this is a point that clearly emerges from the reports of the main international organizations, the Secretary-General's report included — is a new approach to development. One has to agree with those who maintain that there is no greater challenge today than global sustainable development and that United Nations success or failure will be crucial to the outcome of efforts by the international community.

One of the key challenges facing the international community as it enters the twenty-first century is poverty reduction, especially in the least developed countries. Success in this field requires wide application of the principle of solidarity in international economic relations. If globalization is to be harnessed to development and poverty reduction, more is needed than just better coordination among the organizations active in the socio-economic sphere. It is also necessary to stop perceiving development and poverty reduction solely as technical problems. To attack them effectively, there has to be a coherent policy that comprises not only financial and technical assistance but also substantive measures in the sphere of education, culture, good governance, rule of law, democratic institutions, etc.

International solidarity will not deliver results in the shape of building up the production capacities of the poorest countries and enabling them to reap benefits from globalization processes without serious efforts on the part of these countries themselves, in

particular rational economic policies and the ability to make effective use of development aid.

Poland is joining in international endeavours to further effective management of international interdependence, with an appropriate role played by the United Nations system and a key role by international financial institutions in the organization of international economic and financial cooperation. In the framework of a poverty reduction strategy, we are participating in the implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Poland also supports the European Union proposal that World Trade Organization (WTO) members, including in the first place the industrialized countries, should within a year of the conclusion of a new trade round abolish import tariffs and quotas on basically all exports from the least developed countries.

It is precisely in order to stress what we believe to be the crucial significance of solidarity in maintaining peace, security and solidarity throughout the world that the Polish Government, mindful of the experiences of our recent history, will — together with a few other countries — propose that the United Nations proclaim 31 August as "International Solidarity Day"; it is the date of the establishment of the free and independent Solidarity trade union in Poland in 1980.

The qualitatively new feature of the situation at the turn of the century is not only the extent but the greater complexity of the tasks facing our Organization. Greater still are the expectations associated with it of individuals, diverse groups, nations and the whole international community. It is essential that we not only understand the nature of the new problems but also deal more effectively with the matters that have to be tackled by the United Nations, whether or not they form an explicit part of the mandate deriving from the Charter. In roles ranging from preserving peace to human rights, and from development to protection of the natural environment, the United Nations is irreplaceable. It is precisely because of the nature of threats such as environmental degradation in the contemporary world that a speedy and comprehensive response by the United Nations is needed. The sense of "one earth, one human race" requires solidarity-driven and responsible action by all the system's participants.

The tasks and expectations associated with the United Nations require that its role in international relations be strengthened. The system must continue to be the legal and institutional infrastructure of the international order. No other formula provides sufficient legitimization for the performance of this role. The United Nations Charter and Organization are indispensable, in the first place, to small and medium-sized countries. Marginalization of the United Nations would lead to anarchy, in which the only law would be the will of the great Powers and increasingly powerful non-State actors.

The extremely positive trends towards involvement of non-governmental organizations in United Nations activities — a trend steadfastly championed by Poland — must remain consonant with the intergovernmental character of the Organization, whose universal mandate stems from the legitimacy of the States which are its Members. Within this system we must, however, be mindful not only of the rights of States but also of their obligations.

Accountability does not apply only to individuals, though here we are in favour of prompt entry into force of the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court. We cannot allow the United Nations to tolerate a situation of non-accountability of States for violations of international law.

The successes of any organization, its usefulness and effectiveness, are not only a matter of the determination and unanimity of its members. Much also depends on the resources at its disposal, the efficiency of its procedures and the competence of the people operating them. In the past, United Nations officers have provided innumerable examples of their dedication in pursuing the Organization's activities, of their commitment to serving the ideals actuating the United Nations. Better use needs to be made of their potential through constant adaptation of the Organization's structures and mechanisms to changing tasks. That will also make for much better disposition of the Organization's budget.

In our drive to rationalize the United Nations budget, our focus should not be on ways of reducing it. The real problem is that there is not enough money to do all the things that everyone expects the Organization to be doing. The United Nations budget should be tailored to the tasks that we ask it to perform, but also more effectively. We are also aware that the

Organization's regular budget and its peacekeeping budget should be based on the principle of the ability to pay and on realistic economic indicators. Poland is prepared to accept any reasonable and fair changes that may be agreed on the future scale of contributions. We will play a constructive part in negotiations on this problem.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in right of reply.

May I remind members that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Shakerian (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation rejects the claim raised today by the delegation of United Arab Emirates against the territorial integrity of my country and would point out that such assertions are unacceptable. Since our position on the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf is very clear, I need not go into specifics. I should merely like to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been and continues to be prepared to discuss the issue in good faith with the authorities of the United Arab Emirates. We remain hopeful that officials of the Emirates will respond positively to our call for discussions on the basis of the 1971 Understanding.

Mr. Al Hassan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should be pleased if our neighbours and brothers in Iran would translate their words into action, beginning tomorrow. But it is regrettable that the appeal of Iran for dialogue among civilizations which was announced by President Khatami and which we considered a good omen has since more than one year not been translated into practice between Iran and the Emirates.

The United Arab Emirates launched an appeal more than 10 years ago, asking that an agreement be reached between Iran and ourselves in a serious and creative action. Regrettably, however, as the General Assembly heard this morning from the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Iran has so far not even responded to the appeal made by the tripartite committee formed by the Gulf Cooperation Council to establish the machinery for a dialogue between Iran and the Emirates. Iran has so far not allowed this committee to visit Iran. I should like the words of the representative of Iran to be translated into action. We will be happy to respond.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.18

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

18th plenary meeting

Saturday, 16 September 2000, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.00 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by The Honourable Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister and Minister for National Reconciliation and Unity of the Republic of Fiji

Mr. Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister and Minister for National Reconciliation and Unity of the Republic of Fiji was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in the welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for National Reconciliation, The Honourable Laisenia Qarase, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Qarase (Fiji): I bring you greetings from the people of the Fiji Islands.

On their behalf, I also convey our warm congratulations to you, Mr. President, along with the pledge of my delegation to support you and to closely cooperate with you in ensuring the success of this session.

To the Secretary-General, I would like to express the sincere gratitude of the people of Fiji for all that the United Nations family is doing every day, in every part of the globe, to bring relief to those in need, and to promote peace, security and development.

I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome our neighbour and close friend, Tuvalu, as the newest Member of the United Nations. Fiji is very proud to see the flag of this very important Pacific island country taking its place alongside the other 188 Members of the United Nations. We look forward to the admission in the future of more Pacific island States.

I address the Assembly today on behalf of the Interim Administration in Fiji, which I have been entrusted by our President to lead.

In the wake of the coup d'état in my country on 19 May this year, and the political crisis it triggered, my Interim Administration has two very important tasks to undertake within the two-year time frame we have set for ourselves.

First, it is to return Fiji to constitutional democracy and, secondly, it is to stabilize our economy and to lay the foundation for a return to sustained growth and expansion with increased investment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those Governments who have shown sympathy and understanding, who recognize the complexities of the situation in Fiji as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, and who readily accept that solutions to the present political crisis can be developed within Fiji, by the people of Fiji themselves, without external interference in any form.

With the end of the cold war and of the dual division it created in world order, it would seem that a

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new form of imperialism has emerged along with its twin-brother, neo-colonialism. As if the corrosive influence and impact of their mass culture of consumerism and materialism are not enough, this new form of domination is being propagated by the purists of the liberal democracies, in the name of good governance, human rights, accountability and transparency. In themselves, these are important general standards to ensure the integrity of the system of Government in a country, and the just and fair treatment of its citizens. But what is of concern is that we are being told to apply these standards and values of liberal democracy strictly according to their standards, without regard for the particular or complex circumstances in each country.

Our concern is that some of the fundamental principles upon which this unique world Organization was founded 55 years ago are being eroded and violated — the principles of respect for national sovereignty and of non-interference in the internal affairs of an independent State.

We appreciate that we now live in a closely inter-linked global community, and we are all part of one humankind; we are children of one divine Creator. We must, therefore, be concerned about each other, about our common well being, and common basic standards of rights and freedoms.

This, however, does not give a country the right to impose on another, its standards of democratic governance and what it perceives or considers to be right and acceptable.

If, within each of our countries, we believe and accept that civilized behaviour among the citizenry can only be one based on mutual respect, mutual understanding, and a willingness to assist and support each other, why is it that some countries today should think that these rules of civilized and respectful behaviour within a country, should not apply in their dealings with other members of the international community of nations.

I have raised this point not only because we here at the United Nations should be ever watchful of this disturbing negative trend, but also to remind my own country's friends and neighbours that stridency of political rhetoric, smart sanctions and threats of more sanctions will not really assist us in bringing about a speedy and amicable resolution to our political situation. In fact, the very opposite is true; they have only served to harden attitudes of one community against the other. I, therefore, make a plea to Members of the United Nations to show greater understanding of, and sensitivity to, the complexities of the situation in Fiji.

We are a country of many communities and many cultures. All have contributed to Fiji's development. We have all accepted each other as citizens and as communities, and Fiji is our common and permanent home.

But we also have peculiar features, which bear directly on inter-communal relationships within our society.

We have a total population of around 800,000. Indigenous Fijians and Rotumans make up 52 per cent and are growing at 1.8 per cent every year. The second major ethnic group is our Indian community. They make up 43 per cent of the population, but with a low birth rate and emigration, this is continuing to decrease at 0.3 per cent each year. The other communities in Fiji are Europeans, Chinese and Pacific Islanders.

Ethnicity is only one basis of distinction and difference in Fiji. Then there is land ownership. The indigenous Fijians and Rotumans own, by custom, 84 per cent of all land in Fiji. Much of the best of this, however, is on lease for various purposes, residential, commercial and agricultural, and more than 60 per cent of the tenants are members of our Indian community. Most of the agricultural leases are sugar cane farming leases, and more than 75 per cent of these are held by Indian tenants, and most of these tenants have lived on their leased land for three generations.

In our urban areas, the situation is the reverse. The majority of property owners, of businesses, of those in the professions, of those working for a regular income, are non-Fijians and mostly Indians.

In religion, more than 57 per cent of the population, the indigenous Fijians and Rotumans, and the other minority communities, are mostly Christians. On the other hand, the remaining 43 per cent, the members of the Indian community mostly belong to the Hindu, Muslim and other faiths.

Then there are our culture and value systems. Indigenous Fijians and Rotumans have a hierarchical social structure. Traditional hereditary chiefs and commoners alike have their place and role in society and are bound together by reciprocal obligations of

loyalty, obedience, and of sharing with, and caring for, each other and everyone in the community. Fijians value their democratic rights as individuals, but as a community they know their place in their traditional society.

In our Indian and other communities people are much more individually based. There is, therefore, a greater consciousness of and emphasis on individual rights and freedoms — the right to equality, the importance of education, success in professional life and the security of property rights.

We all live together side by side in Fiji, yet we remain apart, separated by our ethnicity, religion, cultural differences and value systems. We communicate with each other, not through the languages of our communities, but through the English language. With regard to our general standards of living, even though indigenous Fijians and Rotumans own 84 per cent of the land in Fiji, they have, on average, the lowest level of household income, and they also lag well behind the other communities in almost every aspect of life in a rapidly expanding market-based economy.

I have explained all this to highlight the delicate and sensitive nature of our multi-ethnic and multicultural society in Fiji. The crux of our political crisis in Fiji is that the indigenous Fijian and Rotuman communities felt threatened by certain policies which the non-indigenous leadership of the People's Coalition Government had implemented following their decisive victory in our national elections in May 1999. It was this fear and anxiety about their future as the world's only indigenous Fijian and Rotuman community of just over 420,000 people that led to mass demonstrations and ultimately the coup d'état on 19 May this year. It also manifested itself in the mass looting of shops, the destruction of property and threats to people and their families. Unfortunately, and tragically, the victims were mainly members of our Indian community.

It was in this serious and deteriorating law and order situation that the Fiji military forces responded to a request from our police to take direct control of law and order and the protection of citizens. To facilitate this, on 29 May the Fiji military forces abrogated our 1997 Constitution.

However, as the civilian interim Administration, we have ourselves taken over from the army, and, as I have said, we are firmly committed to returning Fiji to constitutional parliamentary democracy. We intend to promulgate a new constitution in August next year. General elections will then follow within 12 months. The new constitution is to be prepared by a constitution commission, which we shall appoint early next month. It will be representative of all our communities and will consult widely throughout the country, giving the public at large every opportunity to submit their advice and recommendations on the new constitution.

I should also mention a new initiative I have taken to deal with the inter-ethnic crisis in Fiji: the establishment of a Ministry of National Reconciliation and Unity, together with a Council for National Reconciliation and Unity. It is my sincere hope that the Council will bring together the representatives of the various communities in our rich, multicultural society, as well as representatives of the various sections of the wider community, including employers, trade unions and civil society, to discuss and make recommendations on various ways by which we can promote greater intercommunal understanding and cooperation.

What we have realized is that it is not enough simply to focus attention on the constitution as the framework for our different communities in Fiji to live together peacefully and harmoniously. We need to do more. We have to build and reinforce foundations for living together in all aspects of our lives in our multi-ethnic and multicultural society. We are making good progress in education, and proposals are now under consideration to broaden the curriculum in schools to include compulsory study of the Fijian language, Fijian culture and the ethno-history and ethno-geography of Fiji. We also need to encourage and promote more social interaction and cohesion at the neighbourhood and community level. Most important, it is my sincere hope that the Council for National Reconciliation and Unity will develop a consensus on national leadership and power-sharing in Fiji. I believe sincerely that the most enduring foundation for unity in Fiji is one that is built in a spirit of give and take, of justice and fairness for all and of responsibility for one another.

Very recently the United Nations launched a Decade, from January 1995 to December 2004, on the theme, "Indigenous people: a new partnership", which seeks the formation of new relationships, founded on mutual respect and understanding between indigenous peoples and States and the United Nations. In the context of Fiji, what we hope to build is a new

partnership between the indigenous Fijian and Rotuman communities and the other communities, as the basis of living together in our multi-ethnic and multicultural society in the twenty-first century.

I again assure the international community that within the two years of our transitional Administration we shall return Fiji to constitutional democracy. A new constitution will address the concerns of indigenous Fijians and Rotumans about their future. At the same time, however, it will also maintain and protect the equal fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens and groups, without distinction on the basis of ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, or economic and social status.

Indeed, as the interim Prime Minister in the transitional Administration in Fiji, I am committed to building a united Fiji with a multi-ethnic and multicultural society in which all the different communities can live together in peace, harmony and prosperity, in which the aspirations of the Fijians and Rotumans are realized and the paramountcy of their interests is secure and in which the provision of important social services, such as education and health, to all our communities is a priority, so that the quality of life and standard of living of all our people are continuously improving.

Fiji commends and supports the Brahimi report (A/55/305) on peacekeeping. It is a timely and thoughtful report which, if implemented, will considerably enhance the ability of the United Nations to carry out its peacekeeping tasks. With regard to Fiji's continuing participation in United Nations peacekeeping activities, I am pleased to confirm our positive response to the Secretary-General's request for a further increase in our troops serving in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. In that connection, I commend the efforts of all those involved in the Middle East peace process. Fiji earnestly hopes that the negotiations will be successful in resolving longstanding differences and bring about long-term peace in the region.

We in Fiji have been greatly inspired by the positive developments on the Korean peninsula, with the growing rapprochement between the South and the North. We express the hope that the same spirit of goodwill and readiness to enter into dialogue will also spread to the great country of China, between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. With regard to the very important country of Japan, I reaffirm Fiji's support for Japan's admission as a permanent member of the Security Council.

The Secretary-General's report (A/54/2000), "We the Peoples" has inspired the entire United Nations community with its vision of a more humane and more holistic future for our children and our world. We agree entirely that the United Nations should focus not just on the relationship between and among States, but, increasingly, on the well-being and development of the peoples of this world.

Once again, I extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, and best wishes for a successful Millennium Assembly.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for National Reconciliation and Unity of the Republic of Fiji for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister and Minister for National Reconciliation and Unity of the Republic of Fiji, was escorted from the rostrum.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Kavan (Czech Republic): I would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on being elected to preside over the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and wish you much success as you carry out this important post. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your Namibian predecessor, Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab, for the responsible work and efforts he invested in United Nations activities throughout the year and, in particular, for the role he played in the preparation of the Millennium Summit.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the admission of Tuvalu to the United Nations, another expression of the openness and universal character of this Organization.

The Millennium Summit brought interesting, stimulating ideas embracing the huge potential posed by the experience of the population of the whole planet, formulated in the words of the highest representatives of Member States. The Summit, the most representative gathering ever, gave us a unique opportunity to make a multifaceted review of

challenges the world is facing at the threshold of the new millennium. The unexpectedly positive Summit results are generally being appreciated and approved. However, the implementation of those 32 United Nations Millennium Declaration provisions, as well as of an unprecedented Security Council resolution 1318 (2000), will not be easy, cheap or rapidly attainable.

The start of the 1990s was characterized by buoyancy and great expectations in handling long-term problems connected with the era of Communism in the world, the onset of democracy and the stress on the importance of observing universal human rights. Bound up in this optimism were expectations that were sometimes unrealistic.

Those expectations proved unfeasible in the second half of the decade. The intricate nature of the problems, difficulties in finding lasting solutions, and internal and external crises quite clearly exposed the bounds and the possibilities of the international community, and the United Nations was no exception. Disillusionment and disenchantment sometimes led to the assertion and the defence of utilitarian and other particular interests, which led to feelings of belonging and solidarity being greatly undermined.

The inhabitants of the world, suffering from the ravages of war, poverty, disasters and various forms of oppression, expect actions of us today.

Can we match these expectations? I hope, and firmly believe, that we can. There is no longer time for further devaluation in the significance of the words development, security, cooperation and solidarity. We can no longer abuse the trust and patience of so many people. If reaching a compromise and consensus continues to be impossible for our diplomats, then it will be all the more difficult to find it among States and entities in individual countries.

The United Nations is expected to be able to prove its ability to adapt quickly and carry out internal reform, primarily of the Security Council. The Security Council has to reflect the reality of today, not that of 50 years ago. Only a truly representative and effective Security Council will be able to overcome its current impotence, sometimes veiled in high-sounding but empty phrases. If no remedy is found now, after the Millennium Summit, the United Nations risks loss of credibility, and it will greatly reduce its influence on many processes which are now shaping the world. Here I am thinking especially of those processes we include under the term "globalization".

Globalization does not stop at Forty-second Street. It is rushing around the world with the force of a typhoon, picking up speed as it is fed ever new discoveries in information and communication technology. But globalization is a much more comprehensive phenomenon than the mere standardization of traffic regulations, television systems or bananas. Globalization entails development and human security, as well as poverty and human fear. But it also encompasses human thinking. If it does not embrace solidarity and social justice, it will continue to divide the world between winners and losers, as was mentioned here from this rostrum recently by the German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer. The United Nations can help with this issue. If it fails, it will be guilty of loosing this crucial opportunity of making the United Nations again into a highly respected Organization able to tackle the most important global problems. We have to find the political will and the means to do so.

I would like to dwell on the topic of peacekeeping a little. What I have said about huge optimism and subsequent disenchantment is just as applicable to this area. I am convinced that lasting solutions to conflicts can only be found by peaceful means and by negotiations between all parties involved. Peacekeeping remains a key instrument wielded by the international community, as it establishes peace and peaceful coexistence among the nations.

We welcome the priority given to peacekeeping last week. The Millennium Summit meetings, together with Mr. Brahimi's report, present a unique opportunity to strengthen the United Nations capacity for peacekeeping operations. Our pledges to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in addressing conflicts at all stages, from prevention to settlement to post-conflict peace-building, should bind the international community from the very moment it approved them last week.

Far-reaching but realistic intentions announced from this rostrum by Minister Vedrine on behalf of the European Union earlier this week thus meet our expectations of how to bring into life the Millennium Summit recommendations, anchored in a firm belief in the United Nations potential.

Any reform of the United Nations would not be complete without reforming its crucial body: the Security Council. Its role is irreplaceable. The decision-making process should respond not only to a change in the nature of today's crises, but also to the necessary comprehensiveness of their solutions. An increase in the effective capacity of the United Nations Secretariat to act via the reorganization of its Department of Peacekeeping Operations, closer cooperation and coordination with regional structures is an integral part of the process. We must look for ways to react quickly, promptly and effectively.

The Czech Republic's approach to the reform of the United Nations Security Council has been voiced many times, and we prove it through our active participation, notably in the open-ended working group of the General Assembly and in the so-called Group of 10. Unfortunately, deliberations on Security Council reform are still short of bringing fruit, being effectively paralysed by the particular interests of several States. The new millennium must soon see a new, enlarged and more representative Security Council, preferably with five additional permanent seats for both developed and developing countries and a few more non-permanent seats. We all have to take to heart the appeal of the Millennium Declaration to further strengthen our efforts in this regard.

Whether for programmes or for peacekeeping, in the new millennium the United Nations needs a sustainable and equitable system of financing. In this regard, we are ready to cooperate actively in discussions about making adjustments for the scale of assessments for both the regular budget and the peacekeeping budget. We express our appreciation to the countries that have announced their preparedness to assume additional financial responsibility by moving voluntarily from group C to group B in the peacekeeping operations scale.

The Czech Republic has voluntarily committed itself to remain in group B, but that is not a solution to the problem. A new scale is urgently needed. However, negotiations about such a scale should not be trapped in endless debates over past unpaid debts. All arrears should be settled before the adoption of a new, and hopefully fairer, scale of assessments.

The anniversary we mark this year of the tragic massacre in Bosnian Srebrenica leads me to the issue of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The international community's objective is to achieve peace, but lasting peace requires justice. In this respect, the International Criminal Tribunals set up by the Security Council are of prime importance. Besides punishing offenders, those International Tribunals have another extremely important function: to prove personal guilt in criminal cases and, thus, to reject the notion of collective guilt. The Tribunals are also important as deterrents for those who may be thinking of easing their way to power over the bodies of the innocent. The Czech Republic therefore highly appreciates the work done by the International Criminal Tribunals to investigate the crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and supports the establishment of a similar body to punish crimes committed in Cambodia and Sierra Leone.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia increased its activities during the last year, bringing to The Hague war criminals who had greater responsibility for crimes committed. War criminals have been prosecuted there, but their political and military leaders remain at large. Recent developments, however, have shown that leaders themselves are not immune from international jurisdiction. That trend is best illustrated by the efforts of the international community to establish an International Criminal Court, which most Member States of the United Nations voted for at Rome in 1998.

The creation of a functioning International Criminal Court, an institution that can play an important role in projecting the principle of justice into international relations and in building an increasingly efficient system for the protection of human rights, is one of the priorities of Czech foreign policy in the field of international law. The Czech Republic is taking all the necessary steps to ratify the Rome Statute as quickly as possible.

Developments in international law are directly bound up with the issue of human rights. I believe that the commitment of the United Nations to the right of every human being to a dignified life in safety should become the focus of attention of all Member States of the United Nations. The long and frequently painful process of making progress in international human rights, at the outset of which stood the terrible experience of the Holocaust, has resulted in the concept of universal human rights. The United Nations is playing a key role in implementing that concept.

However, I think it would be wrong to use our contemporary understanding of human rights when we look back at events long past. In the last decade, the international community demonstrated both its determination not to accept abuses of human rights and its willingness to defend the principle of the personal safety of human beings, even to the detriment of the well-established concept of national sovereignty. Accepting limits to absolute sovereignty for the sake of human rights is a matter of political principle and morality that forms the basis of the values of the United Nations. As I said here last year, we would prefer, if any actions do infringe on the sovereignty of Member States, that those actions be made legitimate by a proper United Nations mandate. Human rights is not a process that has been completed; it is still progressing. However, we should not judge history by the standards of today.

The protection of human rights is one of the fundamental principles of Czech foreign policy. Compared with other international compacts, those on human rights enjoy a privileged status in Czech law. I am pleased that the Czech Republic subscribed during the Millennium Summit to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Due efforts to complete a protocol to the Convention against Torture should be made. The Czech Republic also made an active contribution to the preparation of the Declaration on human rights defenders. I believe that the decision made this year by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the appointment of a special rapporteur of the Secretary-General for human rights will help give rise to the mechanism we need for the implementation of the Declaration.

The last of the more general issues I would like to draw attention to is the issue of sanctions. By that I do not mean weapons embargoes. The Czech Republic views them as instruments capable of reducing the intensity of a conflict, supports them and observes them without reservation. A problem, though, lies in the efficiency and impact of blanket economic sanctions. The last 10 years have provided ample proof that in Cuba, Iraq and Yugoslavia, to take just three examples, blanket economic sanctions, whether declared unilaterally or multilaterally, have been unable to achieve their objective.

Poorly nourished, isolated and sick people are hardly likely to rise up against a governing elite that will never allow the consequences of sanctions to affect it or its faithful supporters. The result is that changes in the conduct of the rulers are even less likely.

Growing globalization and the economic and information interconnection of the whole world influence and change the conditions affecting the efficiency of sanctions. The Czech Republic would therefore prefer the use of "smart sanctions" targeted against leading representatives of a State that refuses to observe international law. In my opinion, such sanctions could include a ban on the issue of entry visas and the freezing of assets abroad. I think it would be particularly useful and expedient if the examination of the issue of peacekeeping also included the issue of sanctions. The Czech Republic believes that a similar approach — namely, the appointment of a panel of experts on this issue and subsequent discussion of a report drawn up by that panel — would be of immense benefit in improving our collective efforts to achieve peace and security by punishing perpetrators and not victims.

Allow me to mention how the Czech Republic views some of the most topical questions of international policy.

We believe that boosting defence capacities to protect against potential attack is an absolutely legitimate step by any government. In the case of National Missile Defence, however, we are talking of a concept about which there are many questions. In our opinion, security, as it is conceived of today, is comprehensive and integral — something that cannot be built up to the detriment of other partners.

The Czech Republic believes that the way to a safer world lies primarily in the continuation of the disarmament process and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, leading ultimately to a world free of nuclear weapons. We support the view that a more intense disarmament process will lead to savings in the funds spent on arms. Employing such savings for peaceful purposes would increase the ability of the international community to tackle pressing challenges such as the widening gap between rich and poor countries, and to deal with ethnic and religious conflicts, environmental preservation and so on. I would like to assure the Assembly that efforts to renew the momentum of the disarmament process will

continue to have the unequivocal support of the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic therefore welcomes President Clinton's decision to leave the verdict on National Missile Defence to the new President.

The Czech Republic is monitoring the situation in the Middle East closely, as a traditional and active supporter of the peace process established by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. The Czech Republic resolutely opposes the exploitation of the developments that took place after the Camp David summit to attack the peace process as a whole as well as the positive results achieved so far in negotiations between Israel and the Palestine National Council (PNC). The Czech Republic also emphatically rejects the misuse of this situation to carry out acts of violence, which can only result in unnecessary suffering and more victims. This is not the way to achieve the much-desired peace and stability in the Middle East. The Czech Republic supports the establishment of an independent Palestine, but it would prefer the emergence of such a state in an atmosphere of general support enjoying the consensus of all those involved. That is why we believe that the PNC's postponement of this step by two months creates a certain space for further deliberations. We wish them to be fruitful and successful in their outcome, although we are fully aware that even with good political will on both sides, the issues are thorny and laden with emotions and the burdens of history.

Last year from this rostrum I said that Kosovo would be the benchmark for the success of international institutions. I also said that Kosovo was going through a period when peace must be defended — that is, a period in which it is vital to achieve political stability and democratization, economic stabilization and the gradual development of the region.

We can be proud of what the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) have done to assist the return of ethnic Albanians who were chased out of their homes by Serbian forces.

Regardless of these tremendous efforts, however, we cannot be quite satisfied with the developments in Kosovo. In fact, some of the objectives of the relevant resolution have not been achieved. The positive developments we have seen so far in Kosovo concern mostly one ethnic group; the other still lives under a security threat. There is still a very long way to go before a multi-ethnic, multicultural and democratic way of life prevails in the area.

In keeping with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), the possibility, on a permanent basis, of the return of non-Albanian ethnic groups and the building of a multi-ethnic, pluralistic and democratic society must remain our objectives, no matter how unattainable this aim may seem today. To give up on this objective would be tantamount to an admission of defeat on the part of the international community.

Certain negative features of the developments in Kosovo also hinder the chances for the democratization of Serbia. They play into the hands of those forces in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia which build their election campaigns on xenophobia, on the continuation of the political isolation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia, and on the continuation of sanctions.

In our view, the time has come seriously to consider taking further steps in Kosovo, including at the level of the Security Council. The Council has already taken the first steps in this direction, but it is imperative for it to return to the Kosovo issue soon. Obviously, many things will depend on the results of the forthcoming elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The world beyond the doors of this Hall is changing rapidly. Our children will live and work in an environment that we can only guess at. It is our collective responsibility to do all we can to ensure that it is a world of peace, prosperity, solidarity and tolerance.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister of Foreign and Political Affairs of San Marino, His Excellency Mr. Gabriele Gatti.

Mr. Gatti (San Marino) *(spoke in Italian; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I wish also to congratulate most sincerely the Secretary-General on his comprehensive and detailed report outlining the most important challenges facing the international community in the twenty-first century.

The heads of State or Government of the States Members of the United Nations drew inspiration from this important document for the Millennium Summit, which has just concluded, at which they expressed their collective commitment and determination to adopt policies in favour of a globalization process benefiting the entire world population.

International cooperation among Governments will pave the way for an increasingly integrated system in which all States are inevitably involved, thus bringing all the peoples of the world closer together. San Marino believes that a wider globalization process of a juridical, ethical and cultural nature, in which solidarity is a major concern, is a sine qua non for the achievement of genuine economic globalization.

The Republic I represent is fully convinced that it is the responsibility of all countries of the world to ensure economic and social development and to address threats to international peace and security, and that the United Nations must play a central role in shaping our common future.

Against this backdrop, the question of the least developed countries burdened with a huge foreign debt must be re-examined, in the conviction that debt relief must form an integral part of the contribution offered by the international community to worldwide development.

Since the economic and social development of many countries is being irreparably hindered by debt problems, international solidarity is an imperative for everybody, just as human rights and dignity must not be violated in the name of market laws.

At the dawn of the third millennium, it is unacceptable that half of the world's population still lives in extreme poverty, with an income of barely two dollars a day. The indifference to this problem is a disgrace to humanity as a whole, since we are all well aware that poverty often triggers domestic and international conflicts and leads to exploitation and underdevelopment.

Against this gloomy background characterized by blatant contrasts, the international community must concentrate its efforts on the protection of the most vulnerable, who bear the heaviest burden, and must pay special attention to women and children, who are the main victims of poverty, violence and exploitation. Prompted by the conviction that legal cooperation, at an international level, is crucial to the protection of the rights of the child, San Marino was the first country to sign, this year, the Optional Protocol on child pornography, and the second country to sign the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflicts. The Republic is actively preparing to participate in the Special Session on Children to be held in September 2001, where progress made over the last decade in the protection of children will be reviewed. On that occasion, the international community will lay the foundations for ensuring that children enjoy their full juridical status.

Well aware that legal equality between men and women has become a major concern, both nationally and internationally, San Marino welcomes the results of the 1995 Beijing Conference, as well as those of its follow-up special review session held in New York last June.

The technology revolution, among the most important ones of the last decades, has caused radical changes in international relations. We all hope that information technology and the Internet will be increasingly used by the poorest countries as instruments of economic and cultural development. In this context, I wish to reiterate my country's commitment and willingness to take part in the latest United Nations projects aimed at reducing illiteracy through computer science and promoting the knowledge and use of new technologies in developing countries. In this way, new technologies, far from widening the gap between rich and poor countries, will benefit everybody.

In this spirit, the international community as a whole has the duty to contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Africa and to help its populations, under the auspices of the United Nations, in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and the achievement of just and sustainable social development.

The entire international community has the moral and civil obligation to put an end to the conflicts afflicting many African countries and to counter the growing instability caused by ethnic and territorial divisions in some of these States or regions. In fact, if international peace is to be attained, the right of each individual to live in peace and security must be guaranteed.

The numerous and cruel acts of genocide witnessed by the twentieth century recently led the

international community to set up an International Criminal Court in order to prevent the authors of crimes against humanity from going unpunished. San Marino, the first European country to ratify the Statute of the Court, hopes that other Parliaments will add to the 19 having already deposited their instruments of ratification, so as to attain the minimum number, enabling the Court to be operative and become a juridical and moral authority.

On behalf of my country, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for having made the Organization more efficient and modern, through a series of reforms. Yet, with regard to the reform of the Security Council, Member States could not make any decision in the absence of a general agreement. In this regard, let me express my sincere hope for a comprehensive, democratic and fair reform of the Security Council soon.

At the beginning of a new millennium, the consolidation of a more efficient and representative governance, at an international level, bridging the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots", is our common expectation. Globalization being an irreversible process, we rely on the power and ability of this institution, which we believe in and which we are striving to strengthen.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Ismail Cem, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Mr. Cem (Turkey): Our deliberations come in the wake of the historic Declaration just adopted at the Millennium Summit. Today, we look into the future with greater confidence. Our commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter is undiminished. Our enthusiasm to turn our Organization's goals into solid realities remains high. In our quest for a better world, we are to derive our inspiration from our democratic values; our energy from the dynamism of our societies; and our strength from global solidarity and shared responsibility.

Today, there is no greater challenge for us than the prevention of conflicts and the achievement of peace. The horrors we witnessed in Europe, the Far East and Africa in the course of the past decade compel us with a sense of urgency to devise effective conflict prevention mechanisms and strategies. In his Millennium Report, the Secretary-General articulates the means for conflict prevention. These recommendations, when adopted and implemented, will provide the required capacity and credibility.

As an increasingly active member of the international community, providing civilian and military contingents to peace efforts in different spots, as far apart as South-Eastern Europe and East Timor, Turkey will give substance to United Nations efforts to prevent conflicts. As peace operations become a core function of the United Nations, we feel the urge to have a sounder financial basis. Turkey therefore supported the review of assessments for the apportionment of expenses for peacekeeping operations. We hope that these discussions will lead to a fairer redrawing of the scale.

The rapidly globalizing world provides an appropriate environment for Turkey, at the heart of Eurasia, to serve as a bridge between many nations and civilizations.

A priority task is securing peace and stability in the Balkans. The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, in which Turkey plays an active part, provides a good framework for cooperation and development in the region. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, the full implementation of the Dayton/Paris accords is still our objective. We should preserve Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multi-ethnic, multicultural, independent and sovereign State. Turkey will continue to contribute bilaterally and through multilateral endeavours to Bosnia and Herzegovina's state-building and reconstruction efforts.

In Kosovo, the United Nations has been able to put in place arrangements enabling the population to sustain their daily lives, but the current state of ethnic violence does not inspire hopes for a promising future. The United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo has set new rules for the administration of Kosovo. We look forward in particular to the full recognition of the vested rights of the Turkish community of Kosovo. We hope the shortcomings in this respect will soon be corrected, allowing the multi-ethnic and multicultural structure of Kosovo to be duly reflected in its public institutions and organs.

To turn to a positive development, I should underline that the constructive trend in our relations with Greece I mentioned in my address last year to the General Assembly continues. During the year, we have signed nine agreements for cooperation in a variety of areas, ranging from economy to culture. In this context,

the rapprochement between Turkey and Greece that we initiated has already brought about positive results.

The mutual rediscovery by the peoples of Turkey and Greece of one another and their reconciliation provided the main dynamics of the rapprochement. Almost on a daily basis, politicians, mayors, businessmen, trade-unionists, artists, writers, sportsmen and student groups visit each other across the Aegean or Thrace. Trade between the two countries is flourishing. An unprecedented flurry of activity is being observed along the Aegean coasts and in Thrace. Bilateral tourism is on the rise; joint investments are being carried out. A memorandum of understanding for a joint Turkey-Greece-European Union pipeline project to transport Central Asian and Caucasian energy to Western Europe has been signed.

All these positive developments have revealed once again that the Turkish and the Greek people are in favour not of confrontation, but of cooperation and friendship. The peoples of our two countries have not only superseded their politicians, but have raised a most significant barrier to any inclination to move backwards. The rapprochement between our two peoples constitutes the best guarantee against the inclinations of some politicians who, once in a while, yearn for the confrontational past.

Turkey's attention is also focused on developments in the southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Our historical, cultural and linguistic affinities with the countries of those regions serve as a major asset in our joint efforts to see the peoples of the region move towards higher levels of security and prosperity. Recent terrorist activities, however, pose a new threat to the peace and security of the Central Asian States and are of major concern. We are now seeking ways as to how we can best assist those countries in their struggle against terrorism.

Recent events demonstrate once again that we have to fight international terrorism collectively. We commend the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen the legal framework in the fight against terrorism and urge the General Assembly to keep the matter high on its agendas.

The developments in Afghanistan are cause for grave concern, as they have a direct impact on the stability of a huge region, including Central Asia. In the southern Caucasus, peace has yet to be achieved between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The international community has the obligation to contribute to ending the Armenian occupation of parts of Azerbaijan. Stability in Georgia, on the other hand, remains a goal. We have put forward the idea of a stability pact for the Caucasus and are following up our initiative. The regional countries must develop a growing awareness of the wide-ranging benefits of regional cooperation.

Here, I should also underline that attempts to defame other nations or to extract enmity from history will serve no useful purpose. No nation in the world has the right to use or distort history in order to achieve some kind of identity. Historical research should be left to scholars. In this day and age, we expect all nations to concentrate their efforts on cooperating with each other for the good of their peoples.

The Middle East peace process has reached a crucial phase. Turkey has always underlined the importance of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement on the basis of international legitimacy and within the framework of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and of the principle of land for peace.

The Palestinian issue lies at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the other hand, it has again been proven during the course of negotiations that Al-Quds is the decisive element for peace between Palestinians and Israelis. Progress was made at the Camp David summit, as it was the first occasion at which there was frank discussion of all issues, including the most sensitive. We are heartened to witness the willingness of both sides to continue negotiations and to explore all possibilities. We encourage the parties to remain engaged in order not to waste this historic opportunity.

Turkey is endowed with centuries of experience regarding the area, the wider region and its problems. We also have deep historical, moral and cultural ties with the peoples of the region. Turkey has good relations with the Israeli and the Palestinian parties alike and enjoys their trust. This prompted the parties to solicit our contributions in recent weeks to facilitating a better understanding and greater confidence between them. Turkey will continue these efforts as long as we all think them useful.

I would also like to underline that Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon, within the framework of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), was a step in the right direction. We also hope that negotiations on the Israeli-Syrian and the Israeli-

Lebanese tracks will resume soon and reach a mutually acceptable solution.

As we are recommitting ourselves to uphold the principles enshrined in the Charter with increased determination and vigour, we should likewise avoid being captive of approaches not based on reality. In the same vein, efforts to impose solutions that do not take into account the realities on the ground are doomed to failure.

In line with this very basic logic, the settlement of the Cyprus issue must be compatible with the existing realities on the island. To refresh memories on this particular subject which is sometimes distorted in public opinions by some powerful centres, I would like to summarize the historical background. Cyprus became an international problem as of December 1963 when the joint Turkish-Greek Republic was forcibly destroyed by the Greek Cypriots and an unconstitutional rule was set up at the expense of the Turkish Cypriots. The present situation in Cyprus came into being after the coup in 1974 engineered by Nikos Sampson, the coup leader, who was acting in coordination with the colonels' junta in Greece. This coup murdered many Greek Cypriots as well. The coup toppled Archbishop Makarios and forced him to flee the country. They staged widespread terror and moved to make the Turkish Cypriots subjects of a Greek Cyprus which was designed to be an integral part of mainland Greece.

Turkey, as one of the guarantor powers by virtue of the London and Zurich Agreements, intervened to terminate the ongoing massacres and to prevent the perpetration of similar atrocities in the future. Accordingly, Turkey averted an ethnic cleansing on the island and spared the Turkish Cypriots from sharing the tragic fate of the Muslim Kosovars and Muslim Bosnians of the future. Therefore, it would be a gross distortion of history to consider Turkish intervention as an occupation. On the contrary, it symbolizes liberation for nearly 200,000 Turkish Cypriots. Due to Turkish intervention, not only did the coup in Cyprus fail, but also the junta collapsed, and democracy returned to Greece.

Since 1974, peace and security has prevailed on the island. Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots live on the island as two independent states, two functioning democracies, representing two distinct peoples. In spite of a ruthless economic embargo imposed upon them by the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots have made considerable economic progress.

It is stipulated by the United Nations that both parties through separate referenda should approve a comprehensive settlement mutually acceptable to the two parties. In case the settlement is rejected by one of the parties in its referendum, the proposed solution becomes null and void. It is out of the question, therefore, for an international organization or any other grouping to impose its own solution on the parties. In this framework, the membership of "Cyprus" in the European Union, of which Turkey is not a full member, would be an indirect "enosis" and contrary to the London and Zurich Agreements.

If a mutually acceptable settlement is sincerely sought, then the model is quite clear, based on the realities of Cyprus: a confederation consisting of two states. As to this model, the two independent entities, by virtue of reaching an agreement between themselves, will transfer some of their functions to the confederal bodies. Thus, both the integrity and diversity that emanate from the realities of the island would be preserved. A mutually acceptable settlement in Cyprus cannot be reached through romantic descriptions but through realistic assessments. Therefore, to define the division of Cyprus as "the last wall of Europe" might sound fashionable but the connotations it brings and the parallelism it draws are totally erroneous. First of all, the line defined as a "wall" was not drawn by Turkey. This line was drawn by the United Nations peacekeeping forces in 1963 in order to protect the Turkish Cypriots from the assault of the Greek Cypriots. This is the year when the Greek Cypriots illegally got hold of the state apparatus and conducted violent assaults against Turkish Cypriots.

To refer to some recent arrangements by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on its sovereign soil as an act strengthening the existing barriers is irrelevant. For the "walls to tumble down" in Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot side must first free itself of its present frame of mind. Turkey favours a viable settlement of the Cyprus issue. It supports President Denktaş' confederal proposal and the proximity talks initiated by the Secretary-General.

I would like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my Government for the efforts of the Secretary-General as well as his Special Adviser on Cyprus, Mr. de Soto.

As a new century is being initiated, it is regrettable that the richly endowed continent of Africa is yet to receive its share from globalization. Especially the prosperous nations have to make a sustained effort to counter poverty and disease in Africa and give the peoples of Africa the hope and the means for a more promising future.

We have to vigorously pursue our efforts to make the world a safer place for all. Turkey has always encouraged efforts aimed at achieving meaningful and verifiable arms control and disarmament arrangements. In this context, we are also supportive of nuclear disarmament. It is with this understanding that we are signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We urge all countries that have not yet done so to do likewise.

One of the tools at the disposal of the United Nations to respond to countries that violate international peace and stability is sanctions. In recent years sanctions have become a prominent tool in United Nations collective efforts. There is now an on-going debate on the subject and an assessment is being made on the utility of sanctions.

The effectiveness of sanctions, as we see it, has two important aspects. The first has to do with whether the sanctions applied to a given country or area serve their intended purpose. This, in turn, raises the question of whether the sanctions are properly targeted and whether there is universal compliance. The second aspect concerns the proper implementation of sanctions. They are invoked on the premise that the decisions taken by the United Nations will be respected and that all will share the ensuing burden. Therefore, the collateral effects of the sanctions on third States, and especially the uneven burden they place on countries neighbouring the targeted State, are issues that must be addressed. Moreover, we also should see to it that the adverse effects of sanctions on innocent people, especially on children, women and the elderly, are minimized.

After the widespread economic setbacks of the past few years, the healing process of the global economy gathered momentum. Global integration has been further fuelled by bold leaps in science and technology. However, there is no room for complacency. To ensure that the benefits of revitalized growth are felt evenly on a global scale, continued and intensified efforts are needed at national and international levels.

It is not only the countries that have been exposed to the negative effects of globalization that stand to lose as a result. Global inequality threatens to become a source of political and social instability. The elimination of poverty should therefore remain our paramount goal. To reach this goal, we must achieve good governance, transparency and participation. We must also build strong social safety nets. But these will not yield the results being sought if we do not make adequate provision for the education our people. As physical borders begin to fade, the minds trapped within national domains must also change and be transformed.

We applaud the growing role of the United Nations in the economic and social sphere. With its role in breeding a culture of international cooperation and solidarity — a genuine culture of international cooperation and solidarity — the United Nations has indeed been a source of inspiration for us all.

In one respect we feel we possess most of the elements for a promising future, ranging from increased universal awareness of human dignity to strides in science and technology. Yet, at the same time, we are distressed to find ourselves plagued by war, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, racism, xenophobia, poverty and many other evils, both old and new. As the new millennium is ushered in, we must embrace rationalism, empathy and human solidarity in tackling our common problems. Only then can we relax, having fulfilled our responsibilities to the next generation.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. János Martonyi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary.

Mr. Martonyi (Hungary) (*spoke in French*): I would like to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of this, the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, which serves as a bridge between two millennia. I would like to assure you that you will have the full cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to pay homage to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for the valuable contribution he made to the work of this Assembly, as well as for his contribution to the preparations for the Millennium Summit.

During that Summit, less than one week ago, the heads of State and Government of the Member States of the United Nations adopted a Declaration. The specific commitments and objectives contained in that Declaration pose a complex challenge. Their implementation will require sustained efforts on the part of each of the members of the international community. In making those efforts, all of us — small and large, rich and poor — should keep in mind the common responsibility we bear for the future of our civilization.

The Secretary-General's millennium report and the Declaration it inspired reflect with the greatest eloquence the tasks and the requirements, as well as the worries and fears, facing our planet. And those ideas have been expressed at an opportune moment: the threshold of the new millennium. By taking up the work of implementing this major programme of action, we will be undertaking the indispensable process of addressing the increasingly pressing global problems we are facing.

One of the great lessons of the decade that has just passed, and also of the Millennium Summit, is that with the vanishing of the bipolar world order, East-West confrontation has been replaced by North-South problems. We believe that everything possible must be done so that this divide does not become rigid and so that the problems and difficulties it poses do not persist for too long. The Secretary-General's millennium report, the document adopted during the Summit of heads of State and Government, the many speeches we heard during the Summit — they all show that the international community recognizes and has assessed the scale of the challenges that globalization is forcing it to take up, and they show that the international community is searching for solutions to pressing issues, with the goal of reducing the appalling disparities in the world. There are many such issues and problems. They include poverty, the increasing economic and social gaps between the developed and developing countries, environmental issues, organized crime, international terrorism, AIDS and other diseases, drugs, human migration, the use of the Internet to sow intolerance and extremist ideas, and so forth. It is no exaggeration to say that, in order to ensure a stable, just and prosperous future for all humanity, we must, as soon as possible, get down to work on following up on the decisions that have been taken and on creating international legal standards to the extent necessary. These standards should also be developed in the fields of trade, finance and human rights — most specifically to protect the rights of ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities. As part of this undertaking, it is important to reinforce good governance and solidarity.

Let us recall that the great transformation of the world's political, security, socio-economic and scientific landscape has been accompanied by a remarkable evolution — the return of man to the central place that is properly his on the international chessboard, and by a rediscovery of the purpose of governmental action at the national and international levels. It is not a question of safeguarding States and Governments but of protecting people and communities, human beings, men and women who compose our societies. We must thus realize that political and legislative practices and our future activities in the codification of international law must adequately reflect that fundamental fact that we now see re-emerging.

In this context, the millions of victims of the conflicts afflicting the world and the daily tragedies we continually see mean that we cannot stand with our arms crossed, that we must try to find as quickly as possible a response to the practical and theoretical dilemmas that have been haunting us for some time. There are conflicts within States accompanied by serious violations of the human rights and genuine humanitarian crises. The national authorities, wherever they may be, must not be allowed to systematically persecute their own populations on a massive scale with complete impunity while taking shelter behind certain principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The international community must deal with these situations with a new vision and philosophy that reflect the realities and the spirit of our contemporary world.

As a result of our proximity to the ex-Yugoslavia, my country, Hungary, has felt the whole weight of these problems over the last decade. We have been witness to the serious delays on the part of the community of nations that has prevented it from acting in time in Bosnia and Rwanda, and elsewhere, with the appropriate means on the basis of a mandate corresponding to the real nature of the situation and with the necessary political will. That is why we welcome Mr. Brahimi's report on peacekeeping operations. We are ready to begin without delay the

necessary work to examine and implement these recommendations.

With regard to the Balkan region, the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe that came into being one year ago is an initiative for prevention and reconstruction which offers the countries and the peoples of that part of the continent the possibility to leave their conflicts behind, to settle their differences and to open up new prospects for cooperation. Hungary attaches great importance to this and will make its own contribution to this vital enterprise, particularly in the field of strengthening democratic forces in the region and in human rights, including the rights of minorities.

Within this context, a democratic evolution in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will undoubtedly have a stabilizing effect on the region as a whole and will make it possible to bring to an end the isolation of Serbia from the major European and international currents. The elections scheduled for the end of September offer us an occasion to set this process under way. Such an evolution will enable us to normalize relations between Serbia and Montenegro.

One of the global problems facing us is undoubtedly the question of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We appeal for new progress in the field of light weapons and anti-personnel mines, the victims of which are basically innocent civilians.

The 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons marked an important step forward in the search for a safer future for humanity. The document adopted there reaffirms the central role of the treaty in the field of non-proliferation and the need for international agreement to this end. We hope that between now and the next review conference, to be held in 2005, we will be able to undertake the process of implementing the programme of action which was adopted to promote non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. From this point of view we attach particular importance to the initiation of work towards a treaty on the prohibition of fissile materials for military purposes.

We have also been following very closely the negotiations designed to draw up a verification protocol on the Biological Weapons Convention, which will enter a decisive phase on the eve of the review conference set for 2001. Hungary will chair the ad hoc group charged with formulating a mechanism in that connection and will do everything in its power to achieve the objective over the course of next year.

Hungary considers the adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court one of the most important international achievements in the field of international law. This Statute is aimed at imposing rules of international humanitarian law and at ending an era of impunity. Nineteen States have already ratified the Statute, and the number of signatures is now 112. Hungary views this with pleasure and will pursue its own preparations for ratification of the Statute. We will continue to participate actively in negotiations to bring about universal acceptance of the Court while preserving the integrity of its Statute.

The reform of our world Organization has been on the agenda for some time. Recent events throughout the world — particularly unprecedented changes in the political and military order, economic evolution, progress in the fields of science and informatics, and the end of the century that symbolizes very tangibly the dawn of a new era full of both promises and uncertainty — have transformed the desire to see the United Nations adapt to the realities of our time into an imperative that will no longer tolerate any deviations or hesitation. Consequently, our first task is to face in a determined way the tremendous challenges awaiting us in the twenty-first century. The political will of Member States cannot be lacking if we really wish to make every effort to support the laudable efforts of the Secretary-General to achieve this adaptation process. This will involve, among other things, reforming the Security Council and the budgetary system, which is necessary to strengthen the credibility and efficacy of our world Organization.

The more quickly we can reform the Organization according to the requirements of this critical period, the more reassured people throughout the world will be as to the future of the planet.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, His Excellency Mr. Alojz Peterle.

Mr. Peterle (Slovenia): Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and your country, Finland, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia for his work as President of the General

Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, and to commend him for the guidance he provided throughout the year.

I would also like to commend the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for his inspiring contribution to the noble goals of peace, justice, development and the strengthening of our Organization.

Last week, world leaders gathered here to direct the Organization for the next century. The golden thread of the Millennium Summit was concern for the well-being of all human beings and the common determination to free each and every nation and each and every human being from want and fear, to sustain the future of humanity and to renew the United Nations accordingly. The common goal of all the discussions was to provide for human security in all its complexity and to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality, equity, solidarity and tolerance at a global level.

The United Nations has the obligation to protect the civilian population, particularly the most vulnerable — children, women, the elderly and the disabled — against gross and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law, whether in inter-State or intra-State conflicts. The strengthening of international law is an important element in achieving this goal. Special attention should be given to exploring new methods of conflict prevention, as well as to making better use of those that have proved to have had good results. We should all be engaged more decisively in building a culture of prevention and modernizing and equipping the United Nations for the task.

It is also imperative for the United Nations to elaborate a doctrine for humanitarian intervention based on a modern interpretation of the Charter and in line with new international relations and norms. We listened with interest to the statements made by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada in this Hall on the establishment of an independent international commission on intervention and State sovereignty.

There is nothing in the Charter that could possibly justify crimes against the civilian population. Neither is there anything in the Charter that could possibly justify the fact that large parts of the world are still living in poverty or that some States are stagnating due to the debt burden, while the rest of the world is enjoying a state of well-being. Technological and economic development does bring the world together, but globalization also brings problems closer and increases the mutual responsibility for finding solutions to them.

At the Millennium Summit, we adopted a comprehensive and far-reaching Declaration. Leaders put before us difficult but achievable goals. Member States should now look carefully into how they can contribute nationally to the implementation of the goals at the global level. As a responsible Member of the Organization, Slovenia intends to prepare its plan of action for the implementation of the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. I want to take this opportunity today to mention some of the efforts that we intend to make.

As a country that has just joined the donor community, Slovenia will look closely at how it can organize better in order to extend more assistance to the developing countries and the countries in the region, thus contributing to the goals regarding development and poverty eradication.

We have just signed the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while the National Assembly is supposed to ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court by the end of the year. Both documents are among the most important building blocks for ensuring greater protection for civilians in conflict situations. We are looking forward to the early functioning of the International Criminal Court in order to ensure the more effective, equitable and efficient delivery of international justice.

Slovenia is determined to help in the process of strengthening the Organization as an indispensable foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and just world. Once again, we want to stress the need for the enlargement of the Security Council in its permanent and elected membership, as well as with regard to the reform of its working methods. The credibility of the United Nations depends on its ability to carry out its responsibilities in full, especially with regard to maintaining peace and security. We therefore welcome and commend the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and we are looking forward to the early implementation of its recommendations.

In this context, we believe that the reform of the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations is a necessary condition for a renewed role for the United Nations in this field. A new scale of assessments that more accurately reflects the capacity to pay should be

adopted during this session. I have the honour to announce that the Government of Slovenia has decided to voluntarily relinquish the discount it is no longer entitled to with regard to its financial contribution, and that, starting from next year, it is ready to pay its share for peacekeeping operations in full.

Slovenia is also gradually increasing its participation in peacekeeping operations — those of the United Nations, as well as regional ones. We are committed to further increasing our support to these operations, not only with military personnel, but also with civilian police and humanitarian personnel.

The basic aim of United Nations actions should be to ensure human security, with security being physical, economic and social, rather than legal. We note with satisfaction that the interests of individuals are, indeed, rightly at the very centre of the Millennium Declaration. Slovenia will continue to participate in the group of like-minded countries, which is determined to give full meaning and specific, practical expression to the concept of human security.

The problem of the illicit arms flow of small arms and light weapons is such that it requires additional efforts. We hope that the forthcoming international conference on small arms and light weapons will pave the way for regulating and controlling the proliferation of unimpeded access to small arms and light weapons — the weapons most used in today's armed conflicts.

Member States should also continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of mine action programmes, as well as to strengthen all steps and activities in mine action and mine victim assistance. For its part, Slovenia will continue to support the efforts of its International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victim Assistance to extend its activities to the whole region of South-East Europe. The results achieved in recent years are promising for the activities of the Trust Fund in the future.

I would also like to briefly address the situation in the region of South-East Europe. We are all aware that there will be no self-sustaining peace and stability in the region without the full cooperation and integration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. For obvious reasons, this cannot be expected of the current regime in Belgrade. The international community must cooperate with, support and encourage the forces within the country that are striving for democracy, peace, reconciliation, economic recovery and a return to simple normalcy. We share the hopes of seeing the new democratic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia soon as a part of a stable and prosperous South-East Europe. We also share the hopes that this country will soon join us in the United Nations, as well as in the other international and regional organizations, in accordance with the usual procedures and practices for admission of new members to these organizations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Adbulla, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Oman.

Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdullah (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to extend to you, Mr. President, my sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Millennium Assembly. We are confident that your expertise and knowledge of international issues are an outstanding asset that will enrich the deliberations of this session and help the Assembly reach a successful conclusion. We assure you of our readiness to cooperate with you in fulfilling the objectives to which we all aspire.

I wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the friendly Republic of Namibia, for the successful manner in which he steered the work of the previous session. That session was marked by a genuine desire to enhance and reinvigorate the work of the General Assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our warmest appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his strenuous efforts and commendable endeavours to promote the role of the United Nations and the development of its organs, in order to cope with expectations attached to the Organization in the third millennium.

The Sultanate of Oman welcomes the accession of the Republic of Tuvalu to United Nations membership. We hope that its membership will enrich the efforts of the international community to reach the noble goals of this important international forum in a manner that satisfies the hopes and aspirations of all peoples of the world.

Our heads of State and Government have already described our main concerns and preoccupations during

the Millennium Summit. They perceptively identified a number of lofty values and principles that will guide present and future generations towards secure and stable living conditions based on cooperation and peace. If this goal is to be achieved, we must remain fully committed to it.

We bid farewell to a century, the memory of which includes a host of calamities and human suffering, due to both natural and man-made causes. That century was also marked by many bold and visionary initiatives that greatly benefited humanity.

This stage of the third millennium is characterized by great technological progress that has opened vast horizons for development and prosperity. Yet the emerging international order, commonly called "globalization", has created and increased economic, social and political disparities at both the international and national levels. Globalization presents many concerns and challenges to developing countries, sometimes with unpredictable results. This is a real hindrance to the growth and progress of developing countries, limiting the effectiveness of their economic integration into a globalized economy.

We in the Sultanate of Oman support globalization. However, present indications and approaches, stemming from the World Trade Organization, point toward wealthy countries banding together with the aim of using that Organization as a tool to advance their own interests, to open the markets of developing countries for their own trade and to deplete natural resources of developing countries, regardless of any negative economic and social impact.

One of the most important factors that led to the failure of the Seattle Conference to achieve its expected conclusions was the aggregation of about 20 countries within the Organization attempting to impose their philosophies on the entire world. This conduct is based on an old doctrine of discriminatory policies and selectivity, which insinuates the presence of hidden disputes among various countries. If the World Trade Organization were to be transformed into a wrestling arena, globalization and free trade would not then be able to meet the needs of developing countries.

Furthermore, if developing countries are to survive and to uphold the basic rights of their citizens, they must obtain their fair share of the fruits of globalization. It is necessary to enact laws and regulations and to honour agreements in an equal manner that applies to all, because the dominance of minority law contradicts the principles of good governance. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to devise new measures to assure the utilization of ever-growing technological progress so as to achieve prosperity and development for all.

The international economy continues to prosper after the setback of the 1997-1998 recession, following the economic crash of emerging markets. We need to redouble our efforts in order to avoid recurrence of this. When the G-8 countries met in Okinawa, Japan, they were obliged to consider the problems of the developing countries. The financial assistance offered by the G-8 was itself vivid proof that advanced information technologies are designed in such a manner that they can be monopolized by some and not accessed by others, except with great difficulty and at colossal cost. However, we still welcome some of the decisions of the Okinawa Summit, particularly the financial assistance pledged to combat certain debilitating diseases.

The decision of the G-8 to invite the Group of 77, for the first time, to its deliberations was not merely a ceremonial event. It made the vast disparity that exists between developed and developing countries all the more tangible. The Okinawa Summit addressed the problem of debt, which we believe should be totally abolished, and reviewed the policies of the International Monetary Fund and international financial mechanisms. Among those policies, the fluctuation of international currencies in particular has created difficult economic conditions for developed countries, let alone for countries with small economies that have to trade their resources for hard currency.

The stumble of the Asian economies occurred because of the power of the free market, and largely because of currency instability. The prosperity achieved by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) during decades of dedicated work evaporated. Developing countries therefore have every right to take all necessary precautions against the recurrence of a similar situation.

Together with a number of other countries, the Sultanate of Oman has played a constructive role in establishing and launching the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation. It has done so because the countries of the Indian Ocean possess natural resources and enjoy a geographic location

between three continents and because it is convinced of the importance of that region as a vital economic vein for all its member States and their peoples. The launching of this new Association to join the many regional economic groupings that exist in the world today is a manifestation of the firm desire of its member States to promote such a grouping, which enjoys huge potential and looks forward to creating a huge market.

Based on my country's belief in the importance of regional cooperation as a means to propel the wheels of development and exchange expertise in different fields, we are working on an agreement to establish a regional cooperation group for fisheries in the Indian Ocean. We hope that that initiative will soon see the light of day, thereby bringing about many benefits in the service of regional stability and development. In this context, we look forward to a pragmatic translation of the objectives of the General Assembly Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

Since the dawn of the Omani renaissance, on 23 July 1970, we in the Sultanate of Oman have embraced peace and dialogue as basic principles. We are convinced that dialogue is the natural foundation upon which all forms of conflict between States and peoples can be resolved. Throughout history, mankind has aspired to enhance confidence on the basis of agreed creative ideas that deepen and widen common interests and mutual benefits. We believe that dialogue, rather than conflict and confrontation, will always remain the surest path to security and stability.

The tripartite Camp David summit on the peace process in the Middle East was an extremely significant political step and a display of unique courage by the summit participants. The summit imposed upon itself the task of discussing and negotiating the fundamental issues of a final settlement in an unprecedented and distinguished manner, particularly with regard to the future of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. We express our admiration for, and appreciation of, the historic role and great efforts made by the President of the United States, Bill Clinton. Despite the fact that the summit did not produce a final agreement between Palestine and Israel, it nevertheless opened the door for dialogue on the most complex issues. Significant progress has been achieved on those issues, and the summit established an important understanding of the true scope of peace and the spiritual and emotional sentiments attached to it. It is now vital to conclude an agreement that will lay the cornerstone for lasting peace.

In our view, there has been tangible and clear progress regarding the positions and claims of each party as well as their capability to complete the negotiations. We are confident that the continuation of negotiations and contacts between Palestinians and Israelis, on all levels, is the proper and responsible way to reach the desired objective of establishing a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. We look forward with confidence to a second round of negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, with the continued sponsorship of the United States. Time has bestowed upon all parties a historic opportunity to put in place a solid foundation for peace.

We reiterate our full support to the Palestinian people and their rights to self-determination on their land and to establish an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. In order to strengthen the pillars of peace and security in the region, there is no other sovereignty possible in Al-Quds Al-Sharif except that of the Palestinian State. We expect the State of Israel to understand this fact, which means that the sovereignty of the State of Palestine over Al-Quds Al-Sharif would also allow Israelis full freedom of access to worship and conduct their rituals in peace and security.

We strongly support the position of the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic concerning the restoration of its land to the line of 4 June 1967. We encourage Israel to resume negotiations on this important track in accordance with legitimate international principles and resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. Israel should not feel exposed to security threats in the future because a peace founded on those principles, whether that peace be with Syria, Palestine or Lebanon, will build an effective relationship and partnership that will serve the purposes of security and stability. This, by itself, is one of the most important guarantees of mutual security and stability, especially if it is based on economic development within the context of globalization.

Despite all serious international and regional efforts to alleviate the suffering of the brotherly people of Iraq, the overall situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate as a result of the economic embargo imposed on that country over the last 10 years.

Therefore, we call for the establishment of a mechanism to end the siege and to lift the embargo that has undoubtedly done great harm to the people of Iraq.

Despite the fact that sanctions regime were intended as a political mechanism to guarantee that Governments fulfil their commitments in accordance with United Nations resolutions, that mechanism has now become a weapon that harms the basic rights of peoples and societies. This clearly contradicts the letter and spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Accordingly, we call upon the Security Council to adopt new policies and effective mechanisms that will relieve the suffering imposed on States such as Iraq, Libya and the Sudan.

The Security Council, in accordance with its responsibilities as enshrined in the Charter, should play a positive and unifying role in the maintenance of international security and stability, with the aim of developing new vision, for economic globalization.

The mechanisms available to the Security Council with regard to Iraq are no longer positive tools. United Nations inspectors have exerted substantial efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and have destroyed such known weapons. This could represent sufficient grounds to review the situation once again and determine how to end this tragedy. New mechanisms could be established that would enable the Security Council to continue monitoring Iraq's implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions once economic sanctions have been lifted.

We do not believe that it is justifiable to punish a population simply on the basis of fear and suspicion. The Security Council should protect the Iraqi people from the deterioration of their living conditions. The United Nations has a historic responsibility to cooperate with Iraq in order to minimize the intense suffering that could befall the people of Iraq in future. We look forward to Iraq's positive cooperation in clarifying the fate of the Kuwaitis who remain captive inside Iraq.

We deeply appreciate the efforts made by the Secretary-General in preparing his annual report. It is important to be willing to adopt a new vision for the restructuring of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, as its principal organ, whose primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. We should consider the expansion of its membership to promote equitable representation, and reassess United Nations activities in regions of conflict and tension, ensuring that there is no interference in States' internal affairs.

We fear that the United Nations could become a direct participant in regional conflicts, which would entail financial and moral obligations that it may not be able to fulfil.

We have in the past emphasized the need for international cooperation, which the United Nations can foster in support of regional organizations to achieve peace and development.

The problems of the African continent are intensifying, and it is vital to uncover the causes of these problems. It is incumbent upon the international community to work together and redouble its efforts in a positive and effective manner to resolve current political and social problems as well as ameliorate deteriorating health conditions. The United Nations should elaborate a solid plan in which all States would participate and contribute to the development of Africa instead of fighting for control of its wealth.

We are facing real challenges, which we must be prepared to confront with courage if we are to focus on all aspects of development. We are in need of a new century and a new millennium marked by a sound balance between material values and humankind's legacy of ethical and spiritual values. We are in need of a world in which the strong sympathize with the weak and help them out of their plight. We need a plan of action to increase the standard of living of all peoples throughout the world.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Levens, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Suriname.

Mrs. Levens (Suriname): On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Suriname, I would like first of all to join previous speakers in extending my congratulations to Mr. Harri Holkeri on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-fifth Millennium session of the General Assembly.

Allow me also to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for the outstanding and fruitful way in which he guided the work of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

My delegation wishes to express its deep appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his

continuing and tireless efforts in steering the United Nations through the uncharted waters of world affairs while adapting it to the new global forces of change.

We welcome Tuvalu into the family of nations, and the Republic of Suriname looks forward to working together with it in implementing the principles and goals of the Organization.

This Millennium Assembly is a unique opportunity to take stock of, and to reflect on, recent experiences with the phenomenon of globalization, which continues to dominate developments in the economic, political and cultural field at both the national and international levels, affecting the daily lives of millions of people, their institutions and relations between States.

We recognize that while globalization can be a powerful and dynamic force in the promotion of economic growth and development, it also poses risks and new challenges to individuals and nations alike. The fact of the matter is that globalization has generated new economic disparities, as its benefits remain highly concentrated in only a few countries. This has brought about increased vulnerability and economic instability, in particular to the least developed countries and to the structurally weak and vulnerable small States.

Many of these countries have difficulty in coping with the increased competition arising from trade liberalization and lack the capacity to take advantage of the new opportunities brought about by globalization, which in turn puts them at risk of marginalization and even complete exclusion — the so-called big losers of globalization.

It is for this reason that, during the recently held Millennium Summit, consensus was reached at the highest political level that globalization must be considered in the wider context of development and of our shared responsibility to ensure that, through a more inclusive, transparent and participatory decision-making process in international economic issues, the benefits of globalization are accessible to all on an equal footing.

We also concur with the view that the United Nations, as the most universal forum, has a crucial and central role to play in forging understanding and consensus among its Members, so as to create more opportunities for all, and indeed not to leave billions of people in a state of poverty and exclusion. We look forward to concrete actions to be taken in this regard.

All nations have a collective responsibility to address current global concerns, such as underdevelopment and acute poverty, the growing inequality within and among nations, violent conflicts and civil wars which cause untold human suffering in the South and are fuelled by the global arms bazaar, environmental degradation, refugees and migration, HIV/AIDS and other threats to public health, bridging the "digital divide" and the emergence of global criminal conglomerates.

In the context of the aforementioned, we welcome the initiative taken by the Secretary-General to create a digital task force with the aim of bridging the "digital divide". In order not to lag behind in our present era dominated by the advances in information and communications technology, the President of the Republic of Suriname launched a national information and communications technology initiative in his inaugural statement on 12 August of this year in order to catch the "Internet Express" without delay and to promote national access to information and communication services at all levels of education and all areas of the public domain. We welcome the contribution of the Kingdom of Norway to assist the small island developing States (SIDS) in this regard.

Last April, the developing countries met in Havana and, in a renewed spirit of cooperation, solidarity and shared responsibilities, they agreed to close ranks and implement an action-oriented programme to assist the developing countries in bridging the gap with their more affluent partners from the North. Although essential in contributing to development, South-South cooperation is not a replacement for North-South cooperation; nevertheless better relations between the members of the South will contribute to better relations between the South and the North.

Unfortunately, globalization and trade liberalization have not created the necessary conditions to accelerate growth and development for small and vulnerable States. On the contrary, these countries have been further marginalized in world economic affairs and are threatened by the provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO), demanding an end to the special and preferential arrangements, enacted solely to level the playing field. We, therefore, reiterate our request

for the international community's early adoption of a vulnerability index so as to consider assistance to these countries, based on their specific vulnerabilities and not solely on their gross domestic product. We are pleased that an appeal was made in the Millennium Declaration to enact such a vulnerability index.

Recently, the 12 Presidents of South America assembled in Brasilia to discuss daunting issues that are common to the region and to pledge their political will and support as a firm foundation for enhanced cooperation among their respective countries. We thank the Government of Brazil for so gracefully hosting this Summit. The Declaration coming out of that meeting, in letter and spirit, underlined the necessity of closer cooperation between our countries in order to be able to adapt successfully to the demands of globalization.

At the dawn of the new millennium, the Government of Suriname considers it of crucial importance that Member States achieve tangible results in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in maintaining peace and reinforcing international security for all States.

The reform of the Security Council remains crucial for our efforts to make the United Nations more effective in dealing with global peace and security issues. So far, however, reaching consensus on how to restructure and reform this important body has eluded us as a consequence of differences among the Member States with respect to the scope and nature of the needed changes. My Government reiterates its view that the membership of this Council should be increased with members from both the developed and developing world and considers in this context the proposals presented by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as instrumental.

We also believe that agreement must be reached on defining the relationship between the Council and other principal organs of the United Nations, such as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. We are of the opinion that the Security Council should focus its actions on creating a peaceful security environment, while the temporarily established United Nations involvements related to socio-economic and political development in affected countries should be coordinated by the Economic and Social Council and/or the General Assembly. Such an arrangement, based on the Charter provisions, will undoubtedly contribute to greater effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations, while limiting the influence of national policy considerations on its activities. Let us use the momentum created by the Millennium Summit to strengthen our resolve in reaching a consensus on this matter as soon as possible.

The Government of Suriname wishes to underscore the importance of the United Nations as the universal forum to enable Member States to reach consensus on issues related to peace, security, development and international economic cooperation. We wish to express our gratitude to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for resuming bilateral cooperation between our countries and to thank them for their support in this area.

The United Nations Charter embodies lofty and noble principles that remain valid today, as was reiterated by all the Heads of State and Government at the recently held Millennium Summit.

In order to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's people, we must continue to be guided by these principles in conducting national and international affairs. In this regard, it is essential to honour the commitment to providing the necessary financial means in a timely and predictable manner in order to enable the United Nations to fulfil its mandates.

Finally, as we enter the new millennium in an emerging global village, we must bear in mind that we are one human family in all our diversity, living in one common homeland, the planet Earth, and that we must therefore cooperate in creating a more just, more sustainable and more peaceful world in which everyone will live in a clean environment with a fair distribution of the Earth's resources — indeed, as the Secretary-General has called for in his millennium report, a world free from want, free from fear, that does not compromise the ability of our planet to provide for the needs of our children and for future generations. My country stands ready to play its part and to contribute to this, our common endeavour.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations A 55/PV.19

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

19th plenary meeting
Saturday, 16 September 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: I first call on the Chairman of the delegation of Luxembourg, His Excellency Mr. Hubert Wurth.

Mr. Wurth (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Ms. Lydie Polfer, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg regrets having had to cut short her stay in New York. She has asked me to make this statement in her place.

The Millennium Summit has given us the testimony of the heads of State and Government. This exceptional meeting was the opportunity for a renewed commitment of States throughout the world to our Organization, encouraging common efforts to give every citizen the freedom to enjoy a decent life and opening the way for self-fulfilment for individuals and their communities.

We congratulate and commend you, Sir, as the new President of the General Assembly. We also express our gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for the vigour of his presidency.

Our Secretary-General has tirelessly emphasized the urgent need to act by innovating and ensuring a sustained pace for the work of the Organization. We also commend him and especially encourage him to continue his work.

My speech today will emphasize the themes of Luxembourg's message to the Millennium Summit. The speech by Mr. Hubert Védrine, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the European Union fully reflects the point of view of my country.

In 1999 we restated the main themes of the Luxembourg Government's involvement in Europe and within the United Nations and its commitment to strengthened international solidarity, demonstrated by the fact that in 2000 my country has reached the objective set by the United Nations of official development assistance of 0.7 per cent of gross national product. This year is a time to speak further of the principle of shared responsibility, because the world has to face the old challenges of violence and development, as well as the more recent one of globalization.

Globalization is both a source of achievement and cause for concern. It is ambivalent and requires adequate instruments in order to manage it and gear it towards equitable development. Without a common definition of the rules to be applied, it could give rise to bitterness and revolt. But the use of violence might compromise the path towards development. It is a matter of concern that worldwide arms sales have been on the rise since 1996. The horror of constant violence committed by human beings against each other could simply make us grieve. However, such a passive attitude would not do justice to the realities of this world. The number of armed conflicts has in fact gone down, from 55 in 1992 to 36 in 1998, but this bare statistic does not explain how this decrease took place.

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However, another statistic should grab our attention: between 1974 and 1999, 113 countries went from an authoritarian regime to a multi-party system. More meaningful than statistics is the encouraging fact that the number of negotiation processes has increased, the key to their success often being innovative formulas to achieve peaceful coexistence where previously there was deadlock and resentment.

East Timor, the conference between Somalis in Djibouti and the new inter-Korean dialogue are recent examples. In spite of the obvious difficulties, these constructive developments show by their number and diversity that preventing conflicts is a strategy in motion. We have to consolidate this strategy of prevention in order to show that it produces lasting results. Of course, there are many failures, and we must not close our eyes to the difficulties.

In Kosovo, in particular, intolerant behaviour led to a sort of blindness, even in people who had themselves suffered oppression. Psychology teaches us that former victims do not always avoid eventually becoming executioners. We must put an end to this vicious circle and stop unbridled criminality. The commitment of the Special Representative, Bernard Kouchner, and of all those who are working to brighten a grey sky brings us a message of hope which will bear fruit.

At the end of the cold war our hopes were perhaps inspired by impatience. Today we see that there are solid foundations: above and beyond academic investigations and the awakening of conscience, concrete action is being taken. We thank the community of organizations and individuals present in the field; those who pay with their lives expect others to support them and to provide the necessary means.

But the major responsibility is not to disappoint those in direct need of assistance: victims, displaced persons and refugees, those denied the protection of the rule of law, even the means of subsistence. And when management deficiencies lead to short-sighted over-exploitation and stifling pollution of an environment that can take no more, this phenomenon should be reversed and responsibility established and assumed.

How can we believe that catastrophes will go unnoticed or that international solidarity will not bother to analyse the cause of events?

Crime must not pay. This concept will go from theory to practice in the globalization era. Information is spreading ineluctably and innovations are being made. International law may be lagging behind certain technologies, but it is in the process of being developed. For example, universal participation in the overall structure of multilateral treaties, which was strongly stimulated by the Millennium Summit. Another example is the courts to try war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity. After the creation of tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, some countries are considering establishing courts in cooperation with the United Nations. National courts have instituted proceedings, and as a result the era of impunity is ending. Luxembourg was the eighteenth State to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which will go into effect after 41 more ratifications.

In democracy the rule of law prevails, but political action is crucial to its development. Through the major conferences of the 1990s and their follow-ups, the United Nations has shown clearly that such conferences are also an important source of law. The guidelines that emerge stimulate the creation of domestic laws, and their juxtaposition produces a vast, internationally recognized network. Future actions, including the campaign against small arms, financing for development and the World Conference against Racism, will help promote the rule of law. Stable, but not rigidly fixed, transparent and subject to democratic controls, the rule of law is certainly one of the most reliable pillars for development.

But the international community and the United Nations will have to build other pillars as well as part of the structure for a world in which poverty and violence no longer threaten us. Without going into detail, I refer to the need to remember, respect for equality, the will for prevention and openness to cooperation.

The century which is drawing to a close was the most terrible in the history of mankind in terms of absolute numbers of victims, and also in conceptual terms, because it led to the development and use of weapons of mass destruction. Above all, it saw several cases of genocide on an unheard-of scale, openly motivated by the most despicable racism. It is essential to study the mechanisms which lead to these aberrations into inhumanity, because repetitions of such

destructive phenomena should be rejected and made impossible.

The conclusion to be drawn is that we should remember, which means escaping from ignorance and always bearing in mind the lessons of the past. If the countries of the European Union are very sensitive whenever they encounter xenophobia, racism and the rejection of those who are different, it is because we are resolved at all costs to act to avoid once again succumbing to the sickness of hatred. A Europe with a growing population, a European Union spreading to the east and the south, must act with determination to continue the course of openness.

Luxembourg is a laboratory with a mixture of peoples, as a result of our being at the crossroads of French and German culture and because of the impact of immigration of long ago. The moral outlook of its citizens leads them to respect others and their individuality. With the coming of sovereignty, independence and development became a reality for our country, and with them a strong adherence to the principle of equality, whether of individuals or States.

It is the responsibility of all States to expose the dangers of any tendency to feel contempt for others. Unfortunately, division and lack of respect for the worth of the individual can be seen on every continent. Only five years ago the world deplored the most violent racist crimes in Bosnia and Rwanda. Such crimes must be rejected, for they create openings that the prejudiced quickly take advantage of. We must collectively assume responsibility in the fight against this vicious circle.

Respect for equality requires that we do not make independence a sanctuary. Rather, it demands that we accept each other as partners and recognize the legitimacy of our respective interests. Thanks to the progress of the European Union, classic sovereignty has been replaced for its member States by an interdependence whose positive effects are impressive. The solution, in the year 2000, is no longer abstract independence, but concrete cooperation.

Throughout the year 2000, the Security Council has devoted a great deal of time to Africa in recognition of the seriousness of the phenomenon of taking large portions of countries hostage. Some of these crises are being fuelled by the exploitation of natural resources. The significant international reaction to these events is encouraging, but it must also lead to the elimination of these situations. Among them, I will mention the problems in Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

These catastrophes, along with other developments — in particular in East Timor, in southern Lebanon and along the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea — have contributed to a considerable increase in United Nations peacekeeping activities. However, these activities are suffering from a lack of resources, to such an extent that both their operations and their credibility are compromised. Instead of being a deterrent, they risk becoming simply an alibi.

I hope that this session will be able to adopt energetic measures to implement the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, chaired by Mr. Brahimi. The lack of financial resources should not be an insurmountable obstacle. Further, it is appropriate to take up this issue as part of this session's agenda item on the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations. But in fact, these activities are above all operations aimed at maintaining ceasefires. Achieving peace requires other efforts — first and foremost the will to prevent conflicts and the determination to avoid their resurgence.

After the research, the passionate discussions and the debates — most recently those that took place in the Security Council and in the General Assembly committee on the prevention of conflicts in Africa — have we found sufficient will to now take action? Such a critical mass is necessary if a determined will to prevent conflicts is going to be manifested.

Human solidarity will be essential in those instances in which the parties show they are incapable of avoiding conflict and when attacks on the integrity of individuals and major material consequences can be clearly foreseen. Indifference and lack of assistance in the face of danger no longer accord with the universal awareness of the reality of our interconnectedness, which grows in parallel with the spread of knowledge.

This is an ethical issue, but it is also an issue of knowledge and technical resources. Luxembourg intends to create a civilian action corps to go on humanitarian and human development missions. Luxembourg will contribute to the United Nations funds for peace-building, and it is involved in peacekeeping operations and in reconstruction missions.

The will to prevent conflicts entails the ability to choose from among a great range of mechanisms that are capable of dissuading those who, as a result of ignorance or provocation, are turning to aggression. This will to prevent conflicts can be that much more effective in managing disputes if it is invoked well before violence breaks out. Over eight years, the discreet action of the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mr. Max van der Stoel, has amply justified the confidence placed in him by 55 European States and former Soviet Republics and has produced significant results.

When people are struggling in isolation, external cooperation and solidarity can remove the most difficult obstacles. The noteworthy *Human Development Report 2000* of the United Nations Development Programme stresses the importance of preventing conflicts, of inclusive democracy and of respect for human rights as means of preventing countries that have been bled white from being excluded from the benefits of the global economy and of global technology.

For their part, Mr. Annan and Mr. Brahimi remind us that every action to reduce poverty and ensure a solid foundation for growth is a step towards preventing conflicts. This is one of the keys of development. It is a very reliable method for building confidence and reducing poverty. It is a responsibility that we must take up.

The effort cannot be undertaken unless external cooperation is not in itself an obstacle. In many cases it gives rise to questions and resistance. But cooperation that is not welcome is pointless. Unfortunately, at times mistrust and a certain pride prevail and lead to a fortress mentality. This in turn can lead to overemphasizing identity issues and to the development of a mental block.

When a terrifying earthquake rocked Turkey in 1999, the Greeks offered their assistance. This gesture and the Turks' acceptance of it have profoundly transformed bilateral relations that have been particularly difficult. This positive, spontaneous development was the result of the awareness of Foreign Ministers Papandreou and Cem that the ongoing harm being caused by the earlier mistrust was not acceptable. This positive development is continuing, and it is greatly hoped that it will soon be reflected in the conversations, under the aegis of the United Nations, between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities — conversations that are at present indirect.

When confidence comes up against the invisible wall of ignorance, even the tendered hand will not be taken. Thus, those who are separated by a psychological chasm should construct a bridgehead and express in a decent manner their willingness to achieve mutual recognition.

The Israelis and Palestinians were reconciled in significant ways as a result of the Camp David conversations. President Clinton, for his perseverance, Prime Minister Barak and President Arafat, for their awareness of history and their common acceptance of their shared responsibility to the future, deserve encouragement and the firmest support in their effort to conclude this historic process. I am convinced that the resources of this dialogue have not been exhausted. There is an opportunity to achieve, within the next few weeks, a framework agreement. It must remain clear that the willingness to cooperate has been firmly established. This willingness will be seconded by the willingness of the international community, and of Europe in particular, to offer its support to the establishment of peace and to the reconstruction efforts.

The sculpting of the role of the United Nations, the shape of its future work, will be a complex and demanding task if we expect the Organization to escape its current fragility and affirm its responsibility. But perhaps we can rely increasingly on the vast experience that has been gained during past actions. The development of this collection of experiences requires increasing internal cohesion. The responsibility for the development of this cohesion falls on the Organization's Members. This is the objective we must set for ourselves. The willingness to cooperate must lead to the elaboration of healthy administrative and financial structures, as well as to balanced relations between the principal organs, none of which should be exempt from periodic reform.

Today the United Nations cannot be said to be in a position to meet these criteria. Therefore, is it not indispensable that its Members pay their assessments without delay or conditions, and in full?

The fact that the Security Council is not being reformed and the distance between the Council and the vast majority of General Assembly members does not

contribute to the effectiveness of the Organization. The bridges that the United Nations will try to construct should include, in order to seek greater unity of action, a reinvigorated relationship between the General Assembly and a duly enlarged Security Council.

The United Nations will be put to the test. As a result of the pursuit of globalization the Organization will be in demand. Will it be capable of meeting the challenge and of responding in a way that will put the Organization at the centre of the major international discussions? Even after the Millennium Summit it would be rash to claim that this question is closed. Luxembourg hopes that it will be possible to respond positively, and Luxembourg reaffirms its willingness to cooperate so that we can proceed together in this direction.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Somsavat Lengsavad, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Mr. Lengsavad (Lao People's Democratic Republic) *(spoke in Laotian; English text furnished by the delegation)*: At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that our Assembly stands to gain a great deal from your able leadership and from your wide knowledge of international affairs.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the outgoing President, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, for the guidance he provided to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The twentieth century has been an epoch of great technological and scientific discoveries and achievements. This is indeed one of the positive things about the past century that we all can be proud of. However, this same past century has brought enormous calamities and left manifold complex problems as we enter the twenty-first century.

Certainly, we have to accept the responsibility for resolving them and in order to succeed in addressing this daunting task, we must lay down sound basic foundations aimed at encouraging and building peace and international cooperation for development. This is the lofty goal of our new age that we should all strive to achieve.

In preparation for the new millennium, a number of international conferences were held on different issues under the auspices of the United Nations, such as the World Summit for Children in New York, the Earth Sunimit in Rio, the World Social Summit in Copenhagen, the World Conference on Women in Beijing, UNCTAD X in Bangkok and other international conferences of equal importance. The main objectives of those assemblies were to solve the multifaceted problems that have occurred in the world, with the hope that the new millennium will face minimal risk in every area and that humankind will concentrate its intelligence and resources on developing the economy, civilized culture and prosperity in equality, in a just and peaceful environment free from violent confrontation, with concern for poverty, disease and others. However, the objectives set forth by these conferences have not lived up to our expectations. In addition, new challenges that are far more complex have erupted in the light of globalization.

The South Summit of the Group of 77 and China, which was held in Havana in April this year, rightly identified the positive and negative sides of globalization and put forward a collective guideline for future action. The conference was of the view that the unsolved problems are the well-known issues of the growing debt, the unfavourable world trade measures imposed on goods from the developing countries — in particular, the least developed ones — as well as human resources that have not yet been developed to cope with new technologies and others. Overall, all these issues need to be seriously dealt with together between the North and the South, so as to meet the challenges and make use of favourable opportunities that will lead to a North-South cooperation based on equality and mutual interest, as explicitly expressed in the Havana Declaration.

The achievements of humankind in the past century are of immense value. We believe that, if these achievements are correctly used, happiness and prosperity will be brought to the new generation of the next century. Nonetheless, we are still yet concerned over the challenges that the new generation has to face. Today many young girls and boys worldwide have not enjoyed happy lives and lacked opportunity for education. Moreover, they are subject to exploitation

for the purpose of pornography, prostitution and drug addiction, that destroy their own future, their families, the society and, subsequently, becomes the source of international terrorism.

Similarly, the gender issue is also of great importance. Although equality between women and men is respected and women's participation in social life has increased, poverty and violence continue to be the major obstacles that affect women's life. To successfully tackle this problem, countries around the world should help each other and devote the necessary resources to this domain.

Drug abuse continues to be a subject of major concern for the international community. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Lao Government has implemented, with the cooperation and assistance of friendly countries and international organizations — in particular the United Nations International Drug Control Programme — a number of projects with a view to remedying the effects of drug abuse. Experience has shown that people involved in poppy cultivation continue to remain poor. Therefore, in order to definitely solve this problem, it is imperative to carry out alternative development projects, ensure food security, enable people to earn more by cultivating crops other than poppies, as well as traditional cultivation. The Lao Government is determined to continue its efforts in drug control and supervision. It is our hope that the international community will lend a strong helping hand in order to help us to overcome our difficulties as soon as possible for the bright future of our children.

While the world is entering the new millennium, a number of regional conflicts have been satisfactorily settled, thus responding to the aspirations of the affected nations. However, at the same time, many other regional conflicts remain unsolved and continue to cause pain and suffering to the people directly involved.

In the Middle East, durable peace has not been ensured: the inalienable national and fundamental rights of the Palestinian people have not yet been exercised. We welcome the resumption of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The two parties should seize this opportunity to write a new page of history based on peaceful coexistence and economic cooperation among the peoples in the region. In this perspective, we look forward to seeing the establishment of an independent Palestinian State and of respect for an existence of all States in the region, thus ensuring durable peace and cooperation between the nations, in particular between the Arab States and Israel.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo applied against the Republic of Cuba continues to cause enormous difficulties and damage to the Cuban people. In compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, we urge that an end be put to this restrictive commercial practice, which runs counter to the principles of the Charter, international law and the present world trend.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is following closely the situation in the Korean peninsula. We welcome the outcome of the Korean Summit between Chairman Kim Jong Il of the National Defense Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and President Kim Dae Jung of the Republic of Korea, who met in Pyongyang last June and laid down an important foundation in response to the aspirations of the Korean people for the peaceful reunification of Korea and the settlement of the problems in the Korean peninsula through peaceful negotiations, which contributed thereby to the promotion of peace, stability and cooperation in the region.

On 2 December 2000, the Lao People's Democratic Republic will commemorate its twenty-fifth anniversary. Over this period, the Lao people have upheld the spirit of patriotism, self-sufficiency, and strength and have attracted assistance and cooperation from the international community. They have made tremendous accomplishments in national construction. As a result, their living standard has gradually improved. The most outstanding achievement, attained for the first time in the country's history, is that we have reached self-sufficiency in rice production and even have a surplus for export. The socio-economic infrastructure has been continuously expanded, the State is governed by the rule of law and freedom and democracy are respected and constantly promoted. The solidarity of the Lao people of all ethnic groups has been further strengthened. These are all fundamental factors in ensuring political stability and social order. Thanks to the policy of renewal consistent with the mechanisms of the market economy, the development of the people's right to self-determination and an open-door policy in our international relations, we are

convinced that the Lao People's Democratic Republic will be able to emerge from underdevelopment in the near future.

Globalization has had an uneven impact on the development of every country, because each nation is at a different stage in the development process. While some developing economies are making use of the increasing economic opportunities, a large number of developing countries continue to be marginalized and are therefore not in a position to benefit from this process. Most countries in the developing world continue to face problems of access to markets, capital and technology. Many are obliged to undertake painful structural reforms that are not compatible with their realities and have an undesirable negative impact that impedes their integration into the world economy. Against this backdrop, there is a need to build a favourable environment that would enable the developing countries to compete in the world trading system and to fully benefit from globalization. The United Nations has a crucial role to play in helping to make this happen.

As we bid farewell to the twentieth century, humanity is still yearning for a world of peace, a world free from want and misery, a world governed by international relations based on respect for the national sovereignty of States, co-operation for development and peaceful coexistence between peoples. The international community is therefore duty-bound to increase its cooperation in all possible areas so as to ensure that the objectives of the United Nations Summit Declaration are achieved and to bring benefits to peoples throughout the world, as well as guarantees to new generations of a better life and a more prosperous future. In this spirit, I wish the present session great success.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Paskal Milo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Mr. Milo (Albania): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly, and to express my strong conviction that, under your guidance, the work of this session will be conducted successfully. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my great appreciation for the work carried out by your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, and for his competent guidance of the previous session.

At the start of the new millennium, Albania, as a sovereign and peace-loving country, is committed to making its modest contribution, in the activities of the community of countries Members of the United Nations, to greater peace, stability, security and economic prosperity. It has tried to do so by creating internal political and economic stability, as well as by pursuing a foreign policy aimed at achieving constructive cooperation with the countries of South-Eastern Europe and beyond. Since last year's session, Albania has been taking further steps towards consolidating its democratic institutions and constitutional order, strengthening and liberalizing its economy and consolidating and ensuring respect for human rights. Because of the efficient measures undertaken by the Albanian Government, and thanks to the help provided by our partners, Albania is recovering from the consequences of last year's conflict in Kosovo.

Albania has become an open and safe country for foreign investment. The policies of the Albanian Government to privatize strategic sectors and absorb foreign capital are bearing fruit. The strengthening of security and public order, as well as the fight against organized crime, have reached satisfactory levels that are appreciated not only within my country, but elsewhere. The abrogation of the death penalty and the establishment of the office of Ombudsman have further raised the level of protection of and respect for human rights in Albania.

Albania is currently on the eve of local elections, which will be of fundamental importance for the future development of the country — not because of the results so much as because of the way in which the elections will be conducted. For this reason, the Albanian Government, in close cooperation with specialized international institutions, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Development Programme and others, has made every effort to ensure that these elections are fair, free and democratic.

Albania has clearly expressed its intention to play a primary and constructive role in the common attempts to transform the Balkans into a developed and stable region, clearly aiming at European integration. The policy of good-neighbourliness is not simply a requirement of geography but, above all, an eloquent expression of goodwill and mutual interest in the

protection of democratic institutions, fundamental freedoms, stability and prosperity in the region. Consequently, the Albanian Government has proceeded towards the creation of stable relations of mutual cooperation with Balkan countries, considering that to be a primary strategy for future European integration.

Relations with these countries have been institutionalized not only bilaterally, but also multilaterally. Albania has placed at the core of these relations common economic, political and security interests, as well as respect for human freedoms and rights, including those of national minorities living in the territory of the Republic of Albania. It has tried to make inter-Balkan relations follow the model of existing relations among European Union member countries, with the free movement of people, goods and capital.

More than a year after the bloody conflict in Kosovo that endangered peace and stability in the region, the Albanian Government is of the opinion that the situation in Kosovo has improved significantly since the beginning of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) — the deployment of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the establishment of the United Nations administration. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have returned home, houses destroyed by the war have been rebuilt, the reconstruction of the economy and of the common administration institutions has begun and the political situation and order in the country have improved significantly.

The current situation in Kosovo contradicts the sceptical and nihilistic opinions, expressed here and there, against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military intervention in Kosovo and against the establishment of the United Nations administration there. Our memories of what happened in Kosovo a year ago will not fade, but will make us more conscious of the catastrophic consequences that the chauvinistic policy of a totalitarian regime can bring to an innocent civilian population.

In order to make a contribution to the founding of a democratic society in Kosovo in which human and national rights are fully respected, we have established very close relations with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, KFOR and their representatives. Albanians, even more than other people in the region, wish for and will welcome the democratization of Serbia, because, historically, they have suffered more than others from Serbian nationalism. Often, however, wishes do not match up with reality, and we have to be realistic.

Following very attentively the preparations for local elections in Kosovo, the Albanian Government expresses its conviction that the political forces in Kosovo will conduct their pre-electoral campaign in accordance with democratic principles and values, without acts of political violence. We would also like to express our sincere will for the full participation of the Serb community and of the other minorities in Kosovo in this electoral process because, as we have previously stated, we support a multi-ethnic and multicultural Kosovo.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the entire international community to apply stronger pressure against the Milosevic regime in order to force him to release all 7,000 Albanian political prisoners and hostages being kept in the Serb prisons, to help bring the criminals who caused the massacres against the Kosovar population before the United Nations Tribunal for war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, to strengthen the international police presence and to work on strengthening judicial bodies in order to detect any kind of crime in Kosovo and combat it.

I would also like to reiterate that the realization of United Nations goals for the fulfilment of the promises to start the reconstruction of the Kosovar economy is of special importance. It should be included in regional cooperation projects, especially in the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

Although the Balkan political scenery has changed, and the countries of the region are engaged in a process of cooperation, there still exists a source of tension and conflict in the region, a source that has consequences for the countries of the region and beyond. It is Milosevic's regime. He was not satisfied by the catastrophic 10-year-long conflicts that he personally set off in the former Yugoslavia; now he is destroying Serbia itself, as well as the remaining Yugoslavia.

Next week, presidential and parliamentary elections will be held in Serbia. The current situation there indicates that very little chance exists for them to be free and fair. The recent amendments to the Yugoslav Constitution, the brutal violence against the opposition and the student movement and the

censorship and closing down of independent media are explicit facts proving that Milosevic may transform these elections into a tool for illegally maintaining power.

Like all the rest of the international community, the Albanian Government looks forward to genuine democratic forces coming into power in Serbia, forces that possess new visions for the future of their country and of the whole region.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to thank Mr. Kouchner, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the positive developments in Kosovo and for all that he and his staff are doing to stabilize Kosovo and to establish democratic institutions there.

As a neighbouring country, Albania closely follows developments in Montenegro. It condemns Milosevic's attempts to destabilize that Republic and to undermine the democratic and integrative processes that are being undertaken by the legitimate Montenegrin leadership. Following the good-neighbourliness principle of its foreign policy, the Albanian Government has recently developed intensively its cooperation with Montenegro. Current relations have reached the highest level ever known, having been extended to areas of mutual interest, such as political, economic and trade cooperation, the free movement of people and so forth. It is our intention to further extend and strengthen these relations in the future.

The countries in our region are involved in an already irreversible process: Euro-Atlantic integration. Not only the Balkans, but also Western Europe, is now aware of the danger stemming from a divided Europe, of the danger stemming from a Balkan region that is not integrated into the European Union. The regional conflicts of the last decade are more than sufficient to understand this tendency. Stability in the Balkans is not only in the interest of its countries, but also in the interest of the European Union itself. An economically developed and democratically consolidated Balkans cannot exist without a Europeanized Balkans. The European integration of the Balkans and its development consist of an inseparable unity. It is of no importance whether a country tries to protect its democratic institutions, laws, public order or respect human rights; it can never attain the desired success if it is not economically developed.

We are conscious that European integration is not an easy process; on the contrary, it is a long and difficult path. Before being integrated into the European Union, all the countries of our region should first be integrated among themselves, and existing societies in the Balkans should demonstrate and reflect the best features of European civilization. In order to achieve this, we should first combat and overcome extreme nationalistic concepts, mentalities and policies, because "Europeanization" means cooperation, tolerance and integration.

The end of the conflict in Kosovo marked a turning point for the future of the Balkans. The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe was the best response to the crisis in the region. Our countries, like the European Union member countries, consider this initiative an instrument and a bridge for the integration of South-Eastern Europe into the European structures. The Albanian Government regards the implementation of the Stability Pact as one of its main priorities. Albania is highly appreciated by its international partners for the engagement and the responsibility it has shown in drafting the feasibility studies for the Stability Pact projects. We hope that the strong political will expressed in Sarajevo last year at the end of the Kosovo conflict will be vigorously followed by the will to finalize financial support for the rapid implementation of the Stability Pact projects.

Albania's achievements in its domestic and foreign policy in the year 2000 have only one goal: its further integration within Euro-Atlantic structures. The Albanian people have a clear European orientation, and that is why all Albanian Governments of the last 10 years have enjoyed their total support for their European integration policy. The present Albanian Government, representing and expressing the will of the people, has continuously fulfilled all the required conditions during the last year, aiming at reaching a higher level of relations with the European Union. We hope that in the near future the institutions of the European Union will approve the status report that the Albanian Government presented at Brussels several months ago. This approval will pave the way for the beginning of negotiations to reach Albania's association and stability agreement with the European Union. Albania's acceptance in the World Trade Organization in July this year was also an encouraging and very optimistic event in this respect.

The Albanian Government has welcomed the initiative of President Chirac to organize, on behalf of the European Union, a regional summit in Zagreb in November this year. It is another affirmation of common efforts to further advance the democratization and integration processes in the region and the consolidation of security and stability there.

The new century has started. We should keep on facing old problems, along with our new challenges. Some of those may be local crises, organized crime, traffic in human beings, terrorism, arms control and so forth, all of which require practical and well-oriented cooperation. Bitter experiences in various regions of the world, such as the Balkans, Africa, South-East Asia and so forth, made the role of such organizations as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others more evident. On the other hand, the world has entered the era of globalization. Despite its positive side, globalization is unavoidably accompanied by effects that may bring negative consequences, especially to small and poor countries. In order to avoid these consequences, it is necessary to compile and to implement global strategies, and the United Nations can easily do that.

Only a week has passed since one of the most distinguished events for the international community, the Millennium Summit. It was a unique meeting of all the leaders of the world, where they affirmed their goodwill to cooperate in facing the challenges of the new millennium and in strengthening the United Nations. The Albanian Government hails the results of the Summit and expresses its conviction that all United Nations Member countries should unite all their forces for the fulfilment of the commitments embodied in the final Declaration of the Summit. Following is what the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, wrote in his report:

> "We must do more than talk about our future, however. We must start to create it". *(A/54/2000, para. 17)*

It is time to take concrete steps in this direction.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah.

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam): Mr. President, I should like to offer you my congratulations on your election and my best wishes for the coming year, and also to convey my great appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for his fine work and guidance over the past year.

I would like to start by thanking our Secretary-General for his report to the Millennium Summit. It is comprehensive, ethical and most impressive. We have never had anything like it before. One effect it has had is to give deep meaning to the expression "the international community". I think that in the past, we have often used this term far too lightly. Now we know what it stands for. It is spelled out in the final Declaration made by our heads of Government, which is now a textbook for the coming year. Its great ideas still echo in this Hall, and its noble aims light up the future.

In our view, it has given precise targets that can truly help developing nations. For the first time, we can distinguish clearly between immediate issues and long-term ones. This is very important, because many of the things on which we spend so much time and so many resources are not, in fact, today's issues. They are sad legacies passed on by the twentieth century.

Obviously, they are important. Each one is tragic in the consequences it has for ordinary peoples' lives. But they are all primarily the responsibility of Governments and regional organizations. The more they dominate the affairs of the United Nations, the more they stop us from concentrating on the deep-seated problems of developing nations. Those problems are the ones that can truly be called today's issues. As the Secretary-General highlighted in his Summit report, they are becoming very serious indeed. We have even had to give them a new name: "transnational issues". They each have academic titles: technological problems; demographic problems; socio-economic problems; and environmental problems. But take away the grand language, and they all add up to a simple fact: they are far too big for individual Governments to deal with, or even regional organizations.

It is all too clear that they will not be solved in the marketplace, either. The solutions will not trickle down. In fact, the global market economy has lengthened their list and created its own set of special problems.

It would all be very depressing indeed but for one thing. The Summit Declaration has clearly invited us all, as Members of the United Nations, to accept a joint international responsibility to find solutions. Naturally,

we may differ on how to go about it, but what is most important is that we have to recognize and accept the need for new priorities. Consequently, we highly value the assessment made by the Secretary-General of where these lie.

For example, we appreciate his timely advice that globalization requires policies and measures that are sensitive to the needs of developing nations. We are pleased that he has upheld the peoples' right to development as fundamental. We join him in recognizing the special concern of our friends and colleagues on the African continent. We support all that he is trying to do to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations, because this should enable it to concentrate on what it does best and is best equipped to do.

By this I mean the practical, urgent work done by its organs and agencies and its professionals and volunteers, in the field, close to the people. Much of this represents development in areas such as education and training, which are absolutely critical if the people of developing nations are to move beyond a day-to-day struggle for basic food, shelter and medicine and take part successfully in the new global economy.

It means that the work of agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) is vital. It needs to proceed urgently and not be held back because essential funds are diverted to solving ancient problems.

The vital tasks of the United Nations today should not be held hostage by the twentieth century. It has urgent new work to undertake for developing nations. This work can be simply summed up. It is to ensure that the phrase "developing nations" actually does mean nations that are developing — rather than what they too often tend to be, just a polite expression for the very opposite.

The Summit Declaration offers us all the chance to do just this, in friendship and cooperation, and I hope that we will do everything we can to implement its provisions. It would be the best form of appreciation we could offer to the Secretary-General and his staff at the end of a remarkable year's work.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Angola, His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo de Miranda.

Mr. Miranda (Angola): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I also wish to congratulate, in particular, the outgoing President, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, for the wise and dynamic manner in which he carried out his mandate. I would also like to express our appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his unselfish efforts to make the United Nations an increasingly effective instrument, capable of dealing with the demands of our times and finding and implementing solutions for the most pressing problems of the world.

Just a few days ago, during the Millennium Summit, the leaders of the world defined the priorities of the United Nations for the twenty-first century and expressed the need to adapt its structure for the demands and challenges of the future. During that event of transcendental importance for the lives of the people of this planet, the indispensable and irreplaceable character of the United Nations in international relations was reaffirmed. Member States reiterated their promise to maintain and preserve the United Nations as a privileged mechanism for international dialogue and cooperation in the name of peace and well-being of all peoples.

Indeed, given the role of the United Nations as guarantor of peace and well-being of the peoples, it is urgent that we begin the implementation of actions aimed at adapting its internal structure to new world realities. This will permit the Organization to deal rapidly and effectively with the main problems of the world and avoid having its members resort to solutions outside the established framework of its main organs — namely, the General Assembly and the Security Council.

In recent years, the United Nations sought, through world summits, to find global solutions with broad international consensus for the many misfortunes that afflict humanity, such as local wars, degradation of the environment, violations of human rights and inadequate social development, among others. Various plans of action were outlined. However, the problems

they sought to attenuate or resolve persist. Many have even become worse.

A revision of the mechanism for implementing decisions is needed, through a revitalization and strengthening of the United Nations system, particularly that of its principal bodies, such as the Security Council. From our point of view, that body requires greater internal democracy, and its composition should reflect the current membership in the Organization and its geographic diversity. We think that, in this way, its decision-making would be faster and its performance in the area of peacekeeping and international security more effective.

The persistence of a climate of insecurity and instability in a number of regions of the world cannot be attributed solely to internal causes; it also stems from weakness in the international security system. A reflection of this are the deficiencies that still exist, for example, in the early warning system and in the peacekeeping operations mechanisms. These have not always corresponded to the desired objectives, either because the peacekeeping missions sometimes are not sent in a timely manner, or because at times, they are not provided with adequate human, material and financial resources. Sometimes this is due to the ambiguity in the mission mandate itself.

We recognize that the effectiveness of action in the area of peace and international security does not depend only on United Nations activities. There has to be renewed commitment on the part of each and every State. On this matter, I would like to applaud the recent publication of the Brahimi report.

It is our understanding that the adoption of measures at the national, regional and international levels should be made part of this commitment in order to eliminate the sources of financing for local wars. In the particular case of the African continent, the continent most affected by the scourge of war, the illicit trade in diamonds has been the primary source of support for wars incited by some rebel groups with the objective of overturning democratically elected regimes. Some new initiatives have been launched with the aim of reducing access of these "conflict diamonds" to the international market. My Government supports these initiatives and will provide any cooperation necessary for their implementation.

Another serious issue affecting international security is the circulation and transfer of small arms that flow to areas of conflict by way of rebel groups. This takes place with the connivance of certain Governments and networks of transnational organized crime. The lack of international legal instruments capable of controlling transactions of these arms is stimulating the creation of actual arms markets, above all in Africa. This is leading to an increased number of conflicts and making their resolution even more difficult. According to United Nations data, the effects of these arms on civil populations are shocking. They have already resulted in more deaths than the two world wars combined. In fact, the issue of "conflict diamonds" and the proliferation of small arms assumes special importance for Angola. It is through the sale of illegally mined diamonds that the rebels led by Jonas Savimbi reconstituted their war machine, with which they then undertook a large-scale military campaign aimed at taking power. That war campaign led to a procession of death and destruction, and it is the principal reason for the economic instability in Angola. This scenario is repeating itself in other regions of Africa and the world. For this reason, a solution is urgently required.

The economic and social development and subsequent eradication of poverty, full respect for human rights, democracy and good governance can only be achieved in absolute conditions of peace and stability. It is in this context that my Government established, as a priority, the restoration of definitive peace in Angola. As a result of its efforts to attain this objective, the general situation in Angola has significantly improved. It is for this reason that today we are more confident than ever of a future of peace, development and prosperity.

Indeed, the war has ceased to have the same intensity as it did several years ago, and the conflict itself is moving progressively towards an end. The political and military measures undertaken by the Government have significantly reduced the ability of the rebels to wage war. These measures have also allowed the Government to resume control over nearly the entire country.

More than 12,000 rebel military personnel have abandoned their arms and joined the efforts of reconstruction and national reconciliation. Those who persist in waging war have less and less space, and their activities are limited today to isolated armed attacks against civilian targets, the objective being to destroy and loot the people's property.

The military measures undertaken by the Government represent a necessary and legitimate recourse designed to stop the violence unleashed by the rebels of UNITA, which put in jeopardy the very existence of the Angolan democratic system. However, despite the fact that the ongoing measures aimed at the total control of our national borders and the elimination of the remaining pockets of criminal armed groups are having a positive impact in the search for peace, they do not constitute our only option for the resolution of armed conflict.

Simultaneously, we will continue to implement other actions aimed at guaranteeing the total implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, which for us continues to be a valid basis for the resolution of the Angolan problem. In this context, we reiterate our readiness to continue to integrate in our society all those who choose to abandon the option of war.

The international community, and the United Nations in particular, still has an active role to play in the process of restoring peace in Angola, through the continued implementation and strengthening of sanctions against the rebels led by Jonas Savimbi.

The recent nomination by the Secretary-General of the members of the mechanism to monitor the application of sanctions against the UNITA rebels, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1295 (2000), will contribute to greater international vigilance regarding possible violations. It will deny bases of support to the armed rebellion in Angola. We hope that all Members of the United Nations will extend their cooperation to that body.

The significant improvement of the situation in Angola, however, has not brought an immediate end to the effects of war on the lives of the people. The humanitarian situation continues to be critical, and for that reason we appeal to the international community to increase its assistance to the needy populations.

The positive evolution of the situation is not limited to the politico-military field; it has also carried over into the macroeconomic sector. Angola continues on the path of economic reforms which have earned the confidence of international financial institutions. This progress translated to the recent signature of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund relating to the implementation of a monitored programme.

We hope that the international community will contribute substantially through the investment of capital during the recovery phase of the Angolan economy in supporting stability and growth. Angola adopted legislation to protect foreign investment by providing incentives and guarantees.

The international situation continues to be characterized by violence and tension in various parts of the world; they constitute a serious threat to peace and stability. Angola is seriously concerned by the continuation of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in view of the grave repercussions for stability and development in the central region of Africa. The situation in that neighbouring country, which shares more than 2,000 kilometres of common border with Angola, remains quite volatile and complex. It runs the risk of a serious worsening if appropriate measures are not taken.

The resolution of the Congolese conflict must come about, fundamentally, through the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. In spite of its shortcomings, which perhaps call for a new reading, it continues to be the only basis acceptable to all the parties involved. It respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Invading forces should withdraw completely from Congolese territory and cease immediately their support for the destabilization of that country.

These conditions, in addition to the inter-Congolese dialogue, founded on a realistic base including the unequivocal recognition of the authority of the Government in Kinshasa, will be crucial for the success of the peace process. Angola reiterates its commitment to continue to make the necessary efforts, together with the mediator, President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, and other parties to the Lusaka Agreement, until a way out of the conflict is found.

In Sierra Leone, the prosecution of hostilities continues to delay the pacification of the country. Angola supports regional initiatives aimed at reactivating the peace process and condemns the attacks against United Nations personnel and forces. We support steps aimed at bringing to international justice the principal parties responsible for the atrocities committed against the people of that country.

In Somalia, the progress reached at the national conference led to the re-establishment of some national institutions and moved the country closer to peace.

Angola encourages the continuation of these efforts and hopes that in the near future Somalia may be able to reassume, de facto, its rightful place in the international community.

In the Horn of Africa, the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has undergone some positive movement following the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Algiers. We hope that the two parties honour their commitments under the accord and create conditions for the establishment of good-neighbourly relations and cooperation.

Similarly, we continue to be optimistic regarding the resolution of the conflict in Western Sahara through the implementation of the United Nations peace plan.

Angola is following with particular attention the situation in Zimbabwe, our fraternal country, and supports the efforts of the Government of that country to find a just and fair solution to the land problem that was inherited from the colonial period. In this context, we share and fully support the position expressed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Non-Aligned Movement on land reform in Zimbabwe.

In the Middle East, the question of Palestine constitutes the fundamental cause of conflict in the region. Angola reaffirms its support for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The resolution of this conflict must encompass a political compromise between the parties involved and the effective implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and other understandings reached.

Less than a year ago, the people of East Timor finally succeeded in exercising their right to self-determination. Angola feels pleased and compensated by this historic accomplishment, since it was one of the countries that fought in the United Nations and other international forums for the right of the Timorese people to freely choose their own destiny.

The international community, and the United Nations in particular, which is responsible for the management of the transition period, cannot permit the current climate of violence, provoked by the militias with the objective of impeding the independence of the territory, to impose itself over the will of a people that has already suffered for decades the scourge of colonialism and foreign domination. Angola strongly condemns these acts of violence, which have resulted in great loss of life, destruction and chaos. Angola appeals to the Security Council to take appropriate steps to ensure its immediate cessation.

In the past two years, the world economy has registered a clear recovery since the crisis that shook Asia. The industrial economies and the so-called emerging markets are becoming stronger and achieving considerable rates of growth. However, the present world economic order continues to be marked by sharp distortions between North and South. While the North enjoys unprecedented prosperity, the South continues to suffer poverty and social injustice. Contributing to these ills are restrictive economic measures imposed unilaterally. The embargo imposed against Cuba is one example — its principal victims are the most vulnerable strata of its population. We will continue to support the lifting of the embargo.

The international goal of reducing by one half, by the year 2015, the percentage of the world population living in extreme poverty will require strenuous efforts, above all by the wealthiest countries and international financial institutions. In particular, it will be necessary to relieve the burden of external debt, whose service payments alone absorb a large part of the financial resources of developing countries.

At the same time, steps will be necessary to attenuate the negative impact of globalization. Despite the fact that it has strengthened the spirit of community in international economic relations, globalization has benefited wealthy countries more than underdeveloped countries. The structural adjustment programmes under way in many developing countries should take account of real necessities and specifics, because many of the measures imposed by the international financial institutions have caused serious difficulties, above all of a social nature.

To conclude my remarks, I would like to call attention to the need to pay more attention to the economic situation of the African continent. This should be done in such a way as to facilitate its integration into the world market, particularly through the transfer of technology and increasing productive investment.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila, Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador.

Ms. Brizuela De Ávila (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a source of great satisfaction for me to congratulate you, Sir, a former Prime Minister of Finland, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, which faithfully reflects your personal virtues and diplomatic experience.

I am also pleased to offer my most sincere congratulations to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for his excellent work at the previous session, and in particular for his work to coordinate the preparatory activities for the Millennium Summit.

Special mention should be made of Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his indefatigable work to promote the mandate of this Organization and for his vision for strengthening its future activities, set out in his excellent report "We, the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century".

With regard to the situation in El Salvador, the process of implementing the peace agreements has been an exceptionally arduous and highly complex task that has been made possible by the firm political will of the Government; by the willingness of the Salvadoran people and all the country's political forces; and by national efforts that have enjoyed the valuable cooperation of the international community, in particular the group of friendly countries, which have always remained close to us, and the United Nations, whose verification work has contributed to the success of peace in El Salvador and to national reconciliation.

We are now entering a new phase of our history in which political and economic freedoms prevail. This will ensure the continuity of a broader and deeper process requiring the cooperation and participation of all national sectors and the renewed support of the international community in consolidating the progress achieved and in making further advances towards more humane and supportive forms of co-existence within the framework imposed by our institutions and democratic Government.

During this phase, we have opened up new possibilities and opportunities for all sectors of the country to benefit from peace in democracy and to meet together the challenge of continuing to work to reduce existing disparities in our society, particularly economic and social ones. In this vein, poverty in its various forms is and always has been a structural problem, of which every country in the world is aware. In our case, we are according it priority attention, not only to ensure that these phenomena do not undermine our emerging democracy, which was won by our people with so much pain and blood, but also so that we can assign it due support and social context.

On this basis, President Francisco Flores of El Salvador has focused his government plan on increasing the levels of well-being and progress for all Salvadorans. He has concentrated his attention on the most vulnerable and dispossessed sectors in order to improve their quality of life through a policy to generate employment and job opportunities via enhanced productivity, the promotion of trade and increased investments on the basis of shared responsibility. As President Flores has already done in this forum, I would emphasize the fact that the future of our nation is in our own hands. Each individual, group and sector of our society must assume its own responsibilities and duties in order to overcome the problems of and obstacles to the promotion of growth and sustainable human development.

Similarly, President Flores has emphasized the fact that in a globalized and interdependent world, solidarity and international cooperation are vital to complement the efforts of the developing countries in order to face the global challenges jointly and with greater capacity. It must be understood that this does not mean that the international community, and the industrialized countries in particular, are going to solve our problems, but rather that they can contribute to the creation of an international environment that provides opportunities, including policies that offer greater access to their markets for the products of developing countries, investment opportunities, the transfer of technology and information, and fulfilling the commitments made to improve development assistance.

We know that we are facing an enormous and complex task, and in this effort we hope that we can continue to rely on the valuable support of the multilateral institutions and the community of nations, with whom we share interests and problems — in particular the joint mission to preserve and consolidate peace after conflicts have come to an end. In this regard, as we celebrate the International Year for the Culture of Peace, I would like to reiterate the importance that El Salvador attaches to the continuity of the efforts focused on strengthening a culture of peace, especially on the eve of the International

Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

In Central America, since 1987, when the agreement on the "Procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America" was signed, our peoples have welcomed with hope and have supported national, regional and international initiatives to achieve pacification in the region. These efforts culminated in specific agreements that made it possible to end the armed conflicts in the affected countries and to carry out profound political and institutional transformations, which have contributed to improving living conditions for all the peoples in the region.

Along the way we have adopted and implemented measures and mechanisms that, in a general sense, have made it possible to guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms, establishing the base from which Central America can begin democratic life, free from armed conflicts and with legitimate and sovereignly elected Governments. These Governments, in fulfilment of their historical responsibilities, have established institutions and developed a process of consultation in order to coordinate and harmonize efforts to overcome the profound causes of conflicts and to avoid retreating from the advances achieved.

It is important to reiterate in this forum that the countries of Central America have reaffirmed our commitments to make Central America a region of peace, liberty, democracy and development, and in particular to foster gradually and progressively a Central American union. This is the best route for ensuring a prosperous future for the region and, at the same time, to strengthen our capacity to confront our problems in the best possible way, as well as to take on the new challenges arising from globalization and interdependence.

There is no doubt that the progress achieved at the regional level in the coordination and unification of the internal and external policies of the countries of the region represents real proof of the determination of our Governments to make sure that unity prevails over division. In our opinion there are more reasons that unite us than divide us, and we affirm with complete confidence that in a globalized and interdependent context the viability of Central America will depend on the joint effort to build our common historic future. This is why we must reorient our efforts so that they meet the requirements, aspirations and needs of our Central American people, through specific programmes that provide our people direct and tangible benefits.

Allow me to speak about other important items on the agenda and in the current international situation that are of interest to the Government of El Salvador.

A few days ago the Millennium Summit was concluded, and we can say that the results obtained in the deliberations and reflected in the final Declaration have inspired us with hope. In particular we are heartened by the commitments made to strengthen peace, security and disarmament. Among the most notable of these commitments are to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and to fight against transnational crime in all its dimensions, including the global problem of drugs and related crimes, against the illicit trafficking in small arms, and against international terrorism.

We also are hopeful because of the commitments on a highly sensitive and worrisome issue for our countries: development and the eradication of poverty, and also on the need to develop a multilateral trade and financial system that is open and equitable and is based on rules that are predictable and non-discriminatory. And we are also hopeful because of the commitments to make sure that the high-level intergovernmental meeting on financing for development is a success.

We should mention as well the decision to reduce by half, by the year 2015, the percentage of people on the Earth whose income is less than one dollar a day, including reducing hunger, and on access to drinking water, promoting equal access to various levels of education and promoting gender equality, reducing maternal mortality and the propagation of diseases including AIDS, and protecting vulnerable individuals.

We would also highlight the commitments made to preserve the environment and to intensify efforts to reduce the number and effects of natural disasters. We would highlight as well the commitments regarding violations of human rights, democracy and the good management of political affairs.

In our opinion the issue of the strengthening of the United Nations deserves special attention because of the situation that the Organization currently faces with regard to fulfilling its mandate, which has been apparent during the last 10 years more than at any other time in its history. A crisis of confidence, credibility

and capacity has increased the conviction of the majority of Member States that it is absolutely necessary to introduce substantive changes in the basic structure of the Organization and in its decision-making processes in order to reflect the realities of the current international order, which has greatly changed since the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations.

The international situation today is more complex, multifaceted and uncertain, blending problems and conflicts that have become permanent fixtures on the international agenda, and there are new challenges and threats that transcend national borders. These include phenomena that undermine the security, sovereignty and independence of States. Taken together, these developments provide yet further justification for the existence of the United Nations, as well as for the validity of its objectives and principles.

We recognize and welcome the changes introduced in the basic functional and administrative structure of the United Nations in order to improve its efficiency. Nevertheless, we share the general opinion regarding the imperative need to undertake integral reform. This reform should include substantial transformations in the principal organs, not only so that the Organization can better fulfil its mandate, but also to overcome the contradictions underlying provisions in the Charter so that the system will function in a truly democratic and transparent manner.

First, we must recognize that for many years now the mandate of the Economic and Social Council has been questioned. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to resume negotiations aimed at adopting measures to revitalize one the main functions of the United Nations, which is the promotion of economic and social development. In particular, priority should be granted to sustainable development, with special emphasis on fighting poverty, the fight against drugs and AIDS, the protection of the environment and respect for human rights. All of this is in conformity with the commitments in the Millennium Declaration and especially with the objectives pursued through preventive diplomacy. For this purpose, we believe it is appropriate to reexamine the initiative to create an economic security council which would be responsible for dealing with development problems.

Secondly, we believe it is extremely important to examine and evaluate the functions and powers of the General Assembly, given that this is an essential organ and the most representative body in the structure of the Organization. Nevertheless, its decisions are limited and are not binding upon the Member States. As a result efforts must be made to strengthen and broaden the Assembly's competence as a political forum in order to ensure the true role that it must play in world affairs. In particular the Assembly should be given greater responsibility in the decision-making process. This would not only strengthen the democratization and transparency of the actions of the Organization, it would also give the Assembly the legitimacy it requires in order to carry out collective action.

Thirdly, the reform of the Security Council is, from our point of view, one of the biggest challenges facing Member States; for my Government it is a matter of concern that after seven years of negotiations we have not made progress on the substantive points related to the category, number and privileges of new members, as well as on the question of the veto, which is currently an exclusive privilege of the permanent members.

The differences and the inflexible positions we have seen are unacceptable because they create a situation which, in our view, contributes to the lack of credibility and a loss of confidence in the system of collective security. It is urgent and we cannot postpone overcoming our differences and granting each other concessions so that we can reach a general, fair and equitable agreement in order to achieve the aims of the reform and realize the legitimate interests and hopes of most of the countries of the international community.

El Salvador joins in the very fair demand, expressed so many times in this forum, to increase the number of permanent and non-permanent members to include industrialized and developing countries, faithfully reflecting the current world configuration. The numbers should reflect the current membership of the Organization with equal responsibilities and due respect for geographic distribution. The use of the veto privilege should be limited to Chapter VII of the Charter.

I would like now to refer to other important issues which are part of the Assembly's agenda in the new millennium. These issues have important repercussions for Member States as regards international peace and security, as well as serious consequences for the future of our Organization.

On behalf of the people and Government of El Salvador, we welcome Tuvalu as a new Member of the Organization. This act confirms the right of people to be represented in this worldwide Organization and illustrates the universal nature of the United Nations.

The Charter was adopted on behalf of the people who comprise the international community and, consequently, the United Nations cannot, and must not, close the door to any people which expresses its sovereign will and desire to be represented in the world Organization.

May I refer to the special case which has been discussed in the Assembly each of the last eight years regarding the need to examine the exceptional international situation of the Republic of China in Taiwan with a view to guaranteeing full respect for the fundamental rights of its 23 million inhabitants to participate in the activities of the United Nations.

We support the establishment of a working group in the Assembly to examine the appropriate place that the Republic of China should have in international bodies. We want to make it quite clear that our support for this initiative is not intended as an intervention in the internal affairs of another Member State. Nor does it represent opposition to the peaceful reunification of the Chinese people. Rather, it represents the recognition of the right of a people to realize their just aspirations, a people which exercises democratic rights in a country with which we have had excellent relations for more than 50 years.

El Salvador participated with great interest in the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We recognize that, even though the results were not exactly what we desired, encouraging agreements and decisions were reached in the effort to achieve the objectives of the denuclearization regime which seeks to encourage nuclear States to act in good faith, to meet their international responsibilities and duties and to continue negotiations aimed at eliminating the threat of nuclear war. With these ideas, we join the members of the international community who have expressed their firm support for the proposal by the Secretary-General to convene an international conference aimed at seeking ways to eliminate the nuclear threat.

With regard to conventional weapons, we wish to refer specifically to small arms and light weapons in light of the fact that El Salvador underwent the tragic experience of an armed conflict during the 1980s — a conflict that was intense and of long duration precisely because of the entry and spread of this type of weaponry — weaponry which entered our country illegally in order to supply the irregular militias. However, these weapons reached other parts of the population and resulted in a large number of casualties and the phenomenon of displaced persons and refugees from the areas of conflict. This situation was solved after the signing of the Peace Agreement in 1992.

Not only do small arms and light weapons affect conflicts, be they internal or international, but traffic in these weapons has become a danger for public security and a threat to stability, as well as a threat to the democracy and sovereignty of States, when these weapons are used in activities that constitute transnational threats, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering and international crime. For this reason we firmly support the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2001.

With regard to domestic or international conflicts that continue to occupy the attention of the international community and our Organization, we can only express our concern and regret that agreements have not yet been reached to guarantee peace, despite multilateral efforts. We urge all parties directly involved in each of the countries in conflict to abandon their individual or group interests so that through a national effort, political agreements can be reached which will make it possible for lasting permanent peace to be established in conformity with the aspirations of the peoples.

May I also refer to the Middle East. Here we believe that the recent negotiations at Camp David are an important step in the difficult road to peace. We hope that it will be possible to achieve stable and lasting peace within sure borders for all the peoples of the region.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly are historic events that could mark the beginning of a new era in the international order. Indeed, the Millennium Declaration is an ambitious but vital programme to collectively resolve our common problems. Hence, it is imperative that the commitments which we have made become a reality and, in the short term, we should take concrete steps and show political will for their

implementation. The peoples and Governments of the developing world will be watching closely and we shall do our utmost to implement those commitments. From a realistic point of view they require the decisive support of the developed world in order to be fully implemented.

The President: I now call on the Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and the Francophonie of Gabon, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping.

Mr. Ping (Gabon) *(spoke in French)*: I welcome the opportunity and the honour afforded me to speak on behalf of Gabon at this session of the Assembly which, although a regular one, is no less an exceptional one.

Indeed, not only does this session prepare us to enter fully into the third millennium but also, and above all, it is being held at a time in the history of humankind that gives rise to new encouraging prospects in the minds of men throughout the world for a better future.

This is why, Mr. President, we welcome your election to the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly.

We are in fact convinced that your qualities as a statesman and your wealth of personal experience are a guarantee for the success of our work.

With this in view, Gabon, as a Vice-President, will give you its full cooperation so that this session might effectively meet our expectations.

I am pleased to express my deep gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Namibia, for the efficient way in which he discharged his mandate.

We, in our turn, would like to warmly welcome the State of Tuvalu, which has just joined the great family of the United Nations.

I should like to pay a sincere tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his steadfast efforts to realize the ideals of our Organization.

It has been 55 years since "We the peoples of the United Nations" decided to maintain international peace and security, to achieve international cooperation in solving international economic and social problems and in encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, language or religion.

These are the primary missions set out in the United Nations Charter, which, in Article 55, recommends the creation of conditions of stability and well-being necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among — and, I would add, within — nations.

The San Francisco Charter clearly established a close correlation between peace and development. Indeed, without peace there can be no development, and without development there can be no just and lasting peace. We acknowledge that it is difficult to create conditions of increased prosperity for the greatest number in an environment where chaos and disorder reign. In this regard, the case of Africa is particularly revealing. When, after the end of the cold war, the world seemed to be developing towards a promising situation because of the gradual reduction of inter-State conflicts, the African continent suddenly fell victim to armed confrontations of unprecedented violence. Dormant antagonisms have been reawakened, with the primary manifestation being the clash of arms and disdain for fundamental humanitarian norms.

Several of our countries have come under the yoke of warlords and become chaotic, ungovernable entities that now require humanitarian assistance. Despite the 50 or so peacekeeping operations that it has undertaken since the creation of the United Nations, the Security Council has shown its limitations in the face of crises, especially in Africa. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone and Somalia are all cases that, in recent memory, have put the solidarity of the United Nations to the test.

In the area of development, the world has seen unprecedented economic progress in the past 55 years. Countries that were underdeveloped not very long ago have become dynamic centres of world economic activity. But there is another fact: the vast majority of our countries and peoples remain desperately poor.

In his message to commemorate the World Day of Peace, His Holiness Pope John Paul II wrote,

> "At the beginning of a new century, the one issue which most challenges our human and Christian consciences is the poverty of countless millions of men and women."

According to the report (A/55/1) of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization dated

30 August 2000, almost half of the world's population must content itself with living on less than $2 per person per day. So it is that 300 million Africans do not have even $1 a day on which to subsist. Furthermore, this poverty is being made worse, in particular by the rapid spread of AIDS, another scourge that has ravaged, brought suffering to, divided and decimated entire families in Africa and throughout the world. In some African countries, AIDS has even become the main cause of death.

These are factors for destabilization. While they are all different, together they create disorder and make international relations uncertain. But I do not intend merely to provide a list of all the evils with which the Assembly is only too well acquainted and the United Nations is constantly dealing. Nor should we neglect the efforts undertaken and the progress achieved. Rather, I should like to stress — here I am in agreement with the Assembly — that the United Nations and the multilateral system do not have sufficient resources to face these major challenges. We have been working at this for a long time now. We cannot now give in to discouragement. We are duty-bound to give the necessary impetus to our action.

How are we to do this? First, by moving from a culture of war to a genuine culture of peace. Gabon's dedication to the ideal of peace, which is a constant element of its foreign policy, draws its strength from the same roots as the Bantu civilization. We have a duty to give pride of place to the virtues of dialogue and tolerance among peoples and nations — virtues that we practise in our homes and families, and that my country, through the personal intercession of President Omar Bongo, a tireless mediator, has made into a principle of political and diplomatic culture.

We must therefore return to our roots. That is, we should go back to those traditional precepts that have greater force today than ever before, given that today, peace is most often threatened not from outside our territories but from within. We must adapt the United Nations Charter to these new situations, in particular by adjusting the mandate of the Security Council with regard to internal crises.

It is in this context that we welcome the issuance of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, presided over by Mr. Brahimi. We are convinced that this report will help to promote a new approach to peacekeeping operations. Although peacekeeping operations are necessary as a means of responding, they are nevertheless insufficient. What is at stake in the third millennium is not simply the achievement of ceasefires among adversaries in open conflicts, but the ability to nip conflicts in the bud through action designed to eliminate the deep-rooted causes of violence.

An important step would be the creation or strengthening of regional security machinery to allow us to resolve conflicts through dialogue and negotiation, thus enabling us to considerably reduce military expenditure and allocate the resources thereby released to other development needs.

At the subregional level, therefore, Gabon is contributing, in cooperation with the other States of Central Africa, to the establishment of a climate of confidence after implementing preventive diplomacy.

The heads of State of our subregion have, for example, set up the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), a body for military and political cooperation between the member States of the Economic Community of Central African States, to promote measures to maintain and consolidate peace and security. COPAX has a multinational force for Central Africa and an early-warning mechanism for Central Africa.

The Gabonese Government has taken practical and financial steps for the effective start of MARAC's activities, for which it is the headquarters. However, it goes without saying that it is with the support of the United Nations and other partners that this instrument will play its role fully.

In a broader regional context, a similar framework for joint action, cooperation, development, prevention, management and conflict resolution, the Gulf of Guinea commission, made up of neighbouring Nigeria and seven coastal central African States, was created on 19 November 1999 in Libreville.

Finally, it is important to strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. Gabon, which ratified the Convention banning anti-personnel landmines, the Convention banning chemical weapons and the Treaty banning nuclear testing, will continue to actively support international disarmament efforts by encouraging the process that has been set in motion of combating the illicit trade in light arms and small weapons. The convening, in the summer of 2001, of an

international conference on that trade is important, since it is quite clear that most conflicts in Africa and elsewhere in the world are fed by traffickers in arms, drugs and diamonds, and are supported by, among other things, a number of major multinational corporations that benefit from ill-gotten gains, providing arms and drugs to the conflict zones and participating in money-laundering operations.

We also unreservedly support the creation of the International Criminal Court, and strongly advocate the rapid entry into force of the Rome Statute.

With regard to strengthening the fight against poverty and the initiation of new cooperation in the service of development, the African continent accepts that it bears the primary responsibility for its economic recovery and that success in this task depends mainly on its own efforts. But, at a time when the world is happily entering the twenty-first century, Africa, marginalized, is prey to destitution and poverty. The scope of the crisis it is experiencing and the importance of the resources to be made available require that the international community support its efforts through increased concessional resources, expansion of commerce and trade and debt relief.

Cooperation on this painful issue of poverty was discussed last January in Libreville by the heads of State and Government of sub-Saharan Africa and the Bretton Woods institutions, at a conference where a new approach to poverty eradication was proposed, with a target date of 2015. During that economic summit the heads of State and Government made recommendations on considering the continent's prospects at the dawn of the new millennium and on the challenges to be faced in speeding up economic growth and eradicating poverty.

There is no doubt that poverty eradication requires much quicker economic growth, with its fruits benefiting the greatest number. In this regard, social justice is a useful guide if we wish development and economic growth to produce beneficial results that are more equitably shared.

Our heads of State and Government committed themselves to redoubling their efforts to promote solid and sustainable growth in order to reduce poverty. Furthermore, they reiterated their determination to speed up the process of subregional and regional integration already begun with the creation of the African Union this year in Lomé.

An open and interdependent world needs mechanisms to retain its balance and to help promote justice by preventing aggression against individuals and nature. It also needs participation in development for all countries and peoples and efficiency in economic relations by encouraging transparency, predictability and stability in international relations.

One solution would be — and on this point I agree with the view of many experts — for international development cooperation to cover not only assistance, but also all activities necessary to guarantee sustainable development throughout the world based on the individual.

We could then agree that development assistance first contributes to creating national conditions for development and to combating poverty, which is obviously incompatible with justice, popular participation and effectiveness.

As necessary as the achievement of food self-sufficiency throughout the world may appear, the national capacity of the developing world should be strengthened in order to facilitate the effective implementation of international agreements on environmental protection, trade liberalization, macroeconomic management and banking supervision, which are so essential to the proper functioning of a globalized economy.

Looking back at history, one can see that after the Second World War development cooperation was synonymous with solidarity and aid: assistance from the richest countries to the poorest. It is time for this cooperation to be transformed, made more dynamic and, above all, become part of the new fact of globalization.

The recent ministerial meeting initiated by Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), highlighted the need to strengthen the institution's capacity in order to fulfil its mission more effectively. This strengthening is particularly necessary, since today, more than ever before, it is not possible to conceive of development without taking environmental requirements duly into account. UNDP could, for instance, intensify its assistance to countries that draw part of their resources from forest products to achieve sustainable and ecologically viable management of the forests.

With regard to strengthening protection of the environment, the debate under way in the United Nations, which consists of blaming only the forest countries, is unjust, since we know that the greenhouse gas emissions produced by the industrialized countries are largely responsible for the harm done to our planet. Passing responsibility back and forth would not be constructive. To the contrary, we should rather search together, in the spirit of the 1992 Rio Conference, for ways and means to enable us all to preserve the balance of our natural ecosystem.

I turn to the alleviation of the crushing external debt burden. On this crucial point, my country devotes nearly half its annual budget to repaying debt, thereby compromising its efforts and chances for development. The debt relief mechanisms advocated in recent years have been discriminatory with regard to our country by excluding us from their application. We say that the reasoning is unfair, being based on our high per capita gross domestic product, without taking into account either our ability to pay or the seriously disproportionate distribution of national income between capital, labour and taxation.

A study carried out recently by a team of university specialists in Gabon shows that less than 40 per cent of our gross domestic product is likely to cause a multiplier effect locally.

The peculiar situation of Gabon, the only country in the so-called intermediate-income category in sub-Saharan Africa, is due to the fact that its wealth is produced by, and for, external protagonists.

Thus the appeal made to the international community for a fairer treatment of my country's debt and that of others is not simply a form of begging. What is at stake is the strengthening of the international trading system for the benefit of all, so that globalization, as the Secretary-General has quite rightly said, might become a positive force for all of humankind. The debt problem remains a major source of concern for African countries, not just my own. We believe that our partners should show some imagination rather than coming up with the same tired solutions.

That is why, in considering the debt problem, account should be taken not only of socio-economic [illegible] of the efforts made by a State to environment. We will say it again: helping the South helps the North and helps everyone.

The status of the developing countries, particularly those of Africa, requires broad-based action on the part of the international community in order to translate into reality our duties of solidarity towards peoples.

Official development assistance continues to decline. Following up on the recommendations of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, recently reaffirmed in Geneva, my country, in its fight against poverty, is now implementing the 20/20 initiative — that is, 20 per cent of its national budget and 20 per cent of official development assistance are allocated to basic social services. We all know here that the 20/20 initiative is an excellent way to combat poverty.

Regrettably, Gabon's efforts have been hampered by the dizzying decline in official development assistance and its exclusion from the benefits of external concessional financing.

I turn now to the protection of vulnerable peoples and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Another aspect of political and social problems in Africa and throughout the world is the status of women and children in society. In my country, women have the same rights as men. Our educational system ensures free schooling for all school-age children, in the interests of the Gabonese nation as a whole. School enrolment has risen from 27 per cent in 1950 to more than 90 per cent today.

Furthermore, my country is resolutely committed to promoting and protecting the rights of the child. Accordingly, we hosted in February 2000 in Libreville an international conference on trafficking in children and on child labour.

We call for the implementation of the recommendations of that conference, which are a direct follow-up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two additional Protocols, signed here by the head of State of Gabon.

Regarding the campaign against HIV/AIDS, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that, at the initiative of President Bongo, the Gabonese Government has just

international solidarity fund to combat AIDS would no doubt help the 35 million people stricken with this illness, the majority of whom are in developing countries, especially in Africa.

I turn now to the reform and restructuring of the United Nations system. In his report entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", the Secretary-General emphasized the need to renew the United Nations. This renewal requires that we identify the major assets of the United Nations, rebuild its infrastructure and information-technology capacities, and continue the peaceful revolution — that is, the reforms begun in 1997.

In this context, it is necessary to revise the scale of assessments. It is in the interest of us all that we readjust the scale of assessments, so that the burden of the Organization's expenditures, and thereby its freedom of action, does not rest on the shoulders of only a few Member States.

The current millennium, a symbol of divine generosity and perfection to which we are bearing witness, has the potential to give rise to further progress in the building of a more just and peaceful world. Every nation represented here is a reflection of humankind, whose common values were recalled by the founders of the United Nations. Humanity is itself in the image of God, and we must therefore together bring to fruition the precious gifts bestowed by our Creator: love, peace and freedom.

The United Nations must retain what has shown itself to be tried and true, adapt where necessary and devise new forms of regulation.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communities of Cape Verde, His Excellency Mr. Rui Alberto de Figueiredo Soares.

Mr. Soares (Cape Verde) *(spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over this fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that your well-known experience in the fields of politics and diplomacy will ensure the success of our work.

To your predecessor, Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab, I would like to convey my delegation's appreciation of

I would like also to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the remarkable contribution made by his report, "We the peoples", which provides a solid foundation for our discussions and for our common efforts to place this Organization increasingly in the service of our community of nations.

It is with satisfaction that I extend my warmest congratulations to Tuvalu, a member of the community of small island developing States, on its admission to the United Nations.

During the current session of the General Assembly, important meetings will take place that will address issues vital to the international community. These issues include financing for development; racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; and the development of the least developed countries. These global meetings will certainly significantly enrich the set of consensus documents which we have successfully produced, particularly during the 1990s, and which are intended to provide us with essential frameworks for the optimization of an updated international cooperation.

As is well known, this resource has not been exploited to any great extent. North-South dialogue continues to be affected by reciprocal accusations between worlds separated by gross disparities in the level of well-being.

The world needs to be governed well and in a spirit of cooperation if we really wish to achieve development, justice and peace in a climate of social stability.

And yet, on both the national and international levels, the privileged continue to deny others open participation and a fair share. Thus, the question of governance arises at all levels. But at each level, those in whose interest it is to maintain the status quo use the other level's deficiencies to justify their own inaction. It is a perverse logic to think that our partners' errors authorize us to err as well. This is a pattern of behaviour, and even an assertion, which has been portrayed as reflecting a reality of life; how this is to be overcome has yet to be clarified.

It will be some time before we see even the

highest level, the meetings between international leaders served as a platform for the growing, insistent affirmation that we have the know-how and the means to solve the problems of our societies and of the common ground on which we live. What we lack is the appropriate implementation of decisions and the necessary will to do so. By this, I mean the political will to accomplish collectively what is necessary and sufficient so that we may achieve progress for all humankind, a long-time goal of our ideology and our discourse.

Awareness of the need for this political will stem from the underlying belief that we make up, and are part of, an interdependent international community whose essence links the destinies of all to the success or failure of a single endeavour.

Meanwhile, in the blend of competition and cooperation that characterizes international relations, the scale is still weighted in favour of a framework of inequalities, asymmetries and egotism that increasingly impairs our capacities and our imagination in the effort to achieve general progress and well-being.

Thus, a vital question is that of the extent to which we will see, at the international level, and particularly in the case of those who benefit most from the current situation, a growing belief in the existence of true independence and in the urgency of the need for coordination and cooperation commensurate with such global interdependence.

At the same time, we need to view globalization not as it is today — exclusive, fragmented and offering opportunities only to a select few — but rather as a process that will increasingly reveal and establish the world as a single body.

The Millennium Summit once again posed the question of the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. I believe that our universal Organization has an essential role to play as a catalyst for the tangible realization of the concept of international community inscribed within its Charter and as a basis for its political vision. In the world of today and tomorrow, where events are the result of action by a variety of decision makers, the promotion of such an endeavour by the United Nations presupposes the involvement of all parties concerned — that is, Governments, of course, but also parliaments, the general public, organizations of civil society — of them can and should be included in this undertaking, the purpose of which is to reveal the convergence transcending the apparent contradictions.

As a free, universal association of States, the United Nations has as its mission, and should make itself able, to gather the world's voices and to give them room for dialogue in pursuit of higher platforms of understanding. In that regard, the fundamental values embodied in the Millennium Declaration provide a lasting source of inspiration.

In the short term, however, we need a consistent set of measures in order to create an enabling environment for development in which poverty eradication can be sustainably achieved. The priorities to be considered in developing such measures will vary to some extent. In the areas of greatest poverty, such as the African continent, it is certainly essential to reverse the decline in public health and to devote the necessary resources to improving the quality and expanding the scope of public education. In today's world, there can be no development unless the people have reached a minimum level of health and education, and unless the country in question has reached a reasonable level of infrastructure, without which it cannot viably accept the economic investment that it needs.

Furthermore, countless developing countries continue to hope for lasting solutions to the core problem of an unsustainable debt burden, solutions to replace the long string of half-measures, always too little and too late, with which this issue has been addressed in the past.

Even with adequate economic policies, a responsible administration and a productive society, States' capacity to make real, continued progress will be significantly limited if they face restricted access to international markets and if tariff and non-tariff barriers are imposed on them. Particularly in the case of the least developed countries, these constraints may make it impossible for them to integrate into the global economy.

Before closing, I wish to express my deepest concern at the form and intensity of the conflicts that continue to affect the daily lives of various countries and their peoples, with disastrous consequences at the internal and regional levels. In that regard, it is with the greatest apprehension that we view the current situation in Sierra Leone, a country of our subregion

involving the coordination of efforts by the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will help restore to the people of Sierra Leone the peace and stability to which they are entitled.

Cape Verde continues to follow closely the situation in Angola, a country with which we share a long history. Owing to the refusal of UNITA to respect the relevant Security Council resolutions and to comply with the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol, the humanitarian drama that affects the Angolan people and, in particular, the massive numbers of refugees and displaced persons, has reached intolerable levels. The international community should therefore give the highest priority to providing humanitarian assistance to Angola.

In East Timor, the laudable efforts of the United Nations augur well for the exercise of direct sovereignty and self-determination in the near future. However, there are signs of continued efforts to disrupt this process. The recent murder of international civil servants serving as peacekeepers merits the deepest condemnation of the international community and adequate measures by the Security Council.

The role of the United Nations, increasingly focused on the value and dignity of human beings, requires each of us — large and small, rich and poor — to wager confidently on the solidarity of our common efforts as the touchstone in our collective search for solutions to the problems affecting our planet.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ndombasi (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Once again I shall rely on the kindness of those who interpret our speeches, since I am yet again putting them to the test of working without a written text.

I shall switch between repetition and familiar issues, between deception and truth.

First, repetition. As last year, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Laurent-Desire Kabila, has sent me to this very same rostrum to speak about the same issues. Once again our invaders and aggressors — from Rwanda and Uganda — in this again. This falls under the heading of "repetition". I shall talk about this issue in the spirit and the letter of the principles of the United Nations. The letter is important insofar as it helps us make sense of this situation. I would suggest to delegations a small exercise regarding the reputedly historic work we do here. By playing with "historic" a little, by transposing a letter or two, another meaning can be found.

I am awaiting the letter of the solution that the United Nations will adopt one day regarding the problem of the aggression against, and occupation of, our country by people who are here in this very Hall and who have spoken falsely yesterday and today. Uganda has said that it has come to my country in order to solve problems among the Congolese. Have the Ugandans come as tourists? Have they come as scientific researchers?

We need to return to the letter of the definition of "aggression". These people, who ordinarily are our neighbours, leave their country, cross our borders, come into our country and are occupying it even as I speak. And, as if they had not already gone too far, they have taken it upon themselves to say what we should do to settle the problems among the Congolese people. They do not talk about inter-Ugandan dialogue, they do not talk about inter-Rwandan dialogue. They talk about the inter-Congolese dialogue. Perhaps that is why they are slitting people's throats, massacring people, cutting off penises, burying women alive. They are planting fields of arms in the way that Van Gogh planted fields of sunflowers, burying women alive and leaving their arms sticking out of their graves — with the idea of later harvesting arms. They have multiplied the number of Dachaus by thousands. They shut up our populations in their humble huts and then set the huts on fire. Perhaps this is their understanding of participating in a solution to the Congolese problem. Unjustifiably!

It is a deception for the head of State of one of these countries to play around in New York and say "We will not leave the Democratic Republic of the Congo." Notwithstanding the clear resolutions of the Security Council — resolutions 1234 (1999) and 1304 (2000) — which state plainly that the Rwandans, the Ugandans and Burundians must leave the Democratic Republic of the Congo, representatives of those countries come here and say "We will not leave." These impostors come to this [illegible]

leaders and other representatives of the countries gathered here.

I do not want someone to tell me — even if it is true —

(spoke in English)

"You have made a wonderful speech."

(spoke in French)

I want to be told "We shall report back to our Governments and heads of State what you said, because it is the truth", truth in response to deception. As the philosopher Spinoza said, "Verum index sui et falsi"; that is, truth is a touchstone both of the truth itself and of falsehood. One of our singers — his name, Koffi Olomide, is worth remembering — sings, in one of the languages that are well known to Africans who listen to Congolese music and from which I am translating, "A lie takes the elevator, but the truth uses the stairs." The phrase is even prettier in Lingala.

And so it is — the lies of the aggressors have quickly arisen to fool people. They are trying to pass for little lambs, these people who are in a country that is not their own, where no one wants them to be and where they have not been invited. They are there. And they have the nerve to say "We will not leave", notwithstanding the clear Security Council resolutions that enjoin them to leave our country without delay or conditions.

I am repeating today what I said last year; however, I must repeat this because these people are still in my country and show no sign of leaving. They have outrageous plans, such as creating a "Great Lakes Republic" by cutting up our country and joining entire provinces of it to their countries.

All of this will seem quite clear if you look at a map of my country. You will see that our 2.347 million square kilometres are located amid small asteroids that gravitate around it in some sort of Brownian motion. They enter our country, massacre people and, as I said earlier, shamelessly state that they are not going to leave. They believe that this lie will prevail because it has taken the lift, while our truth has to take the stairs. But I believe that our truth is making headway in your minds. Right is on our side.

None of our own soldiers are in Kigali or in Kampala, but there is an unwanted multitude of foreign weaponry. No doubt they are there for tourism. Since we are embarking upon a historic millennium — and we should consider the meaning of that adjective — we must remind those people that they have to leave now, today. They should go home. They must not remain in my country because what they are doing is abominable.

I have given the Assembly a Dantesque description of what these people are doing in my country, supposedly for peaceful reasons. They are massacring people, as I have stated. They are burying women alive and cutting off the penises of prisoners. This needs to be analysed. Why would anyone do that to prisoners? The lies in the lift will not tell you about that, but the stairway will. I hope you will inform your respective Governments of the realities of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. People say it is complex, but in fact it is not complex at all. Those people are not in their country. They have crossed our borders, supposedly to secure their own borders and supposedly because the *genocidaires* are in my country, occasionally returning to their own countries to sow disorder.

Once again, look at a map of our country. You will see that the asteroids that I mentioned, Rwanda in particular, have borders on Lake Kivu. It is a very small area that is the real border between us. If you look at the map, you will see that these asteroids, in order to secure their borders, have gone 2,000 kilometres beyond this real border, to the Atlantic, to start a war. We do not know how they manage to move their soldiers around because they do not have aeroplanes, however, know that they manage. They move heavy weaponry 2,000 kilometres in order to start a war, the purpose of which is to defend their borders 2,000 kilometres away. Who can possibly believe this? Who can claim that this is the truth? When you wish to defend and secure your border, you put your troops at your border so that others do not cross.

There is yet another lie: they say that they are pursuing the perpetrators of the genocide that everyone remembers from 1994. They claim that they are pursuing them because they have hidden in our country. Well, these people occupy two provinces in the border area of our country and one other province that is even farther away, farther from the equator.

They have never caught any *genocidaires*, living or dead. It would be a shock if they did. The Rwandans

are saying that there are *génocidaires* in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to justify their presence. However, they have never caught any.

Why have they never caught a *génocidaire*? I think they are incapable of doing two things at once. Each Rwandan or Ugandan has only two hands, and those two hands are busy. Do you know what they are doing? They are taking our diamonds, copper, gold, precious wood and rare animals, which they do not have on their asteroids. And they are becoming diamond exporters. If you look at the stock exchange, you will see that Rwanda this month exported so many diamonds, but those diamonds are covered in the blood of the Congolese people. The "gemocracy" that employs them is doing the same thing in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Angola. One could say that the common denominator between those countries and ours is that we are under the thumb of "gemocrats" who prevent us from creating democracy. We have "gemocrats" against democrats. That is the deepest meaning to be found in these poor countries that wish to become rich through pillaging and plundering, which they do in the full light of day where everyone can see them. What is more surprising still is that nobody tells them to stop their plundering and go home. This is an absolute fraud, and it threatens our African brothers as well. A country that is one eightieth the size of ours, that not long ago, before Lumumba, held the reins of our country, dares to allow its justice system — because in our country there are patriots and nationalists —

I come from a province near the Atlantic, 2,000 kilometres away from the Rwandan border. I see appear in my province people who are easily recognized by their phenotype, accompanied by some Congolese passing through the province on their way to Kinshasa. They even go to the airport to defend their borders, which are 2,000 kilometres away. Our patriots and nationalists stand up and do not welcome them. We tell them what we must tell them, as a true patriot would do in the face of the invader.

That country, one eightieth the size of our own, allows its justice system to prosecute me, to issue an arrest warrant against me and to inform all other countries that if I go to their country, I should be arrested for crimes against humanity, just because I spoke as a patriot against those who have come into my country.

One country, more powerful than the others, has asked, because of the thrashing it has received, to be allowed a corridor to the Atlantic. We do not know how these people got to the province of Kivu, which they have virtually annexed. They have changed the local administrators, appointed new governors and changed the telephone system. In order to call this province, you have to dial the code for Rwanda. This is well known. They even direct automobile traffic. In other words, they have completely taken over our province. Nonetheless, in their speeches they say they are in favour of the territorial integrity and political independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the same time, though, they are appointing governors in our country, changing the names of our streets and making decisions as if it were their country.

These countries have spilled blood in our jungle and dare to assume the right to tell us who our Minister for Foreign Affairs should be. In threatening my freedom of movement, perhaps they imagined that I would not manage to reach New York, but we have more than one trick up our sleeve. Here I am. I will leave New York and go wherever my President tells me to go. We hope that other countries that wish to maintain good relations with us will refuse to heed these uneducated judges.

I say "uneducated" because I have urged our people to rise and crush the invaders and to make them eat their words, but these judges thought I had called for the invaders to be strangled. These judges are so uneducated they did not realize that I was quoting Voltaire. And now that I've admitted to quoting Voltaire, they will probably issue international arrest warrants for him, because they have no idea who he was. Who are these countries to appoint themselves universal judges and to prosecute people who are not their citizens for acts that were not committed in their territories? These judges do not rely on law — since their position is indefensible — but on the law of the jungle, because they are hunters. They made their pronouncements two years ago. They are like hunters who make no sound as they stalk their prey, but I too am silent. I have not been warned or notified, but INTERPOL knows it must arrest me if it gets its hands on me. They have been just like big game hunters.

Everyone knows what happened to our Prime Minister, Mr. Lumumba. In the tragedy in which a Secretary-General of the United Nations lost his life, the people — one person in particular — who carried

out that dirty work dissolved Lumumba's body in sulphuric acid. Perhaps they are after me now because they are suffering a shortage of sulphuric acid. This gentlemen kept one of Lumumba's teeth as a talisman and displayed it on television, admitting that they had dismembered Lumumba's body, dissolved it in sulphuric acid and kept his tooth as a charm. These universal judges have not been moved to prosecute the person who boasts of having dissolved Lumumba's body and kept one of his teeth. I think these people intend to open a museum some time soon and to grow rich charging admission to see Lumumba's tooth.

My African brothers may also be prosecuted when people arrogating the right to appoint members of Government issue warrants for them. That is why my brothers should not remain silent. They are foreign ministers and the same thing could happen to them. They should react. They should not think of me as someone who is uneducated. These countries must be prevented from acting beyond their rights. No one assigned them the task of running the world's affairs through their own brand of justice.

I do not wish to linger on this ridiculous topic, but I would go even further in discussing truth and mendacity. Everyone is convinced that we are erecting obstacles to the diplomatic work of the United Nations, but Lumumba's tooth should be a sign that we have historical reasons for our actions. What goes around comes around. I recognize that we have been very particular about how the United Nations forces may be deployed, but we have acceded to the Organization's wishes. We agreed to the Mission and to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, although the fire has yet to cease. People persist in believing in the validity of the Agreement, but it was signed on 10 July 1999 and the fires are still burning today and the war continues. Still, people keep talking about the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

Well, the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement designates the invaders, the aggressors, as "parties". These parties signed the Agreement, but Security Council resolution 1304 (2000) implies that they are the aggressors and enjoins them to leave my country. Thus, they are no longer parties, but aggressors who should leave as soon as possible.

Moreover, their Congolese puppets are playing the role of Trojan horse. These invaders have exploited certain Congolese supporters of Mobutu to justify their invasion of our country and their aggression. Now, one of these asteroids is giving shelter to Mobutu's former soldiers. They are training in Kampala and their aim of returning to Kinshasa has been openly declared. One large country is helping others to build military bases on our borders and is training their soldiers in order to increase tourism in our country.

We must be vigilant. We must act to ensure the implementation of the United Nations resolutions. We would tell the United Nations that, in order to be more effective and to have a greater chance of success, it must implement its own resolutions. I would express the hope that I shall not have to return here next year to repeat yet again that the Rwandans are still in my country, sowing death and pillaging our land. The United Nations must finally implement its own resolutions.

How can it do so? It can compel the Ugandans and Rwandans to return to their homes. We do not want them in our country. They are our eternal neighbours, asteroids that orbit our planet. Let them go home. Let them talk to us. We want this war to end as all others do: with negotiations. The Second World War ended in negotiations, the war in Algeria ended in negotiations between France and the National Liberation Front, the war in Viet Nam ended in negotiations between the host country here and the Vietnamese, the war between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, which has broken all endurance records, is showing signs of ending soon. How? Through negotiations between the Catholics and the Protestants.

Just the other day, in reference to another topic, I mentioned that Security Council resolution 242 (1967) was adopted over 40 years ago, but that it is only now beginning to be implemented. Now, we are not going to wait 40 years for our Clinton and our Camp David. The United Nations must implement its resolutions immediately. It must support us to ensure that the aggressors, whatever they may say, go home. They are not at home. We do not want them in our country. They must go home.

The Second World War erupted after a long incubation. We now see hope for perpetual peace following that war, but I agree with Paul Eluard that we must be vigilant because the womb that bore the vile beast is still fertile. We want all men, even our enemies, to be our brothers. We want to rebuild our country, which was dismantled by the excesses of

Mobutu Like Lizard, we want to turn water into light and, as I said, to make every man our brother.

That is my message to the Assembly. I repeat: do not tell me:

(spoke in English)

"You have made a wonderful speech."

(spoke in French)

Say: "We have understood your message and we shall tell our Governments to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions immediately so that the aggressors go home". Please help us to talk with them, in order to put an end to this war, which should end as all wars end. Some of us lost all our hair waiting for the blessed day, 17 May 1997, after 32 years of activity. Look at President Kabila's head and mine; we can be recognized by our advanced baldness, which came about while we were waiting for the moment when we could re-enter Kinshasa.

So, my African brothers and my brothers from other countries, including many from Latin America, I conclude with a Spanish saying. I do not wish to translate it, so those who do not understand will have to stop a Spanish-speaking colleague and ask "What did he say?"

(spoke in Spanish)

"When your neighbour's house is on fire, watch out for your own house."

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.